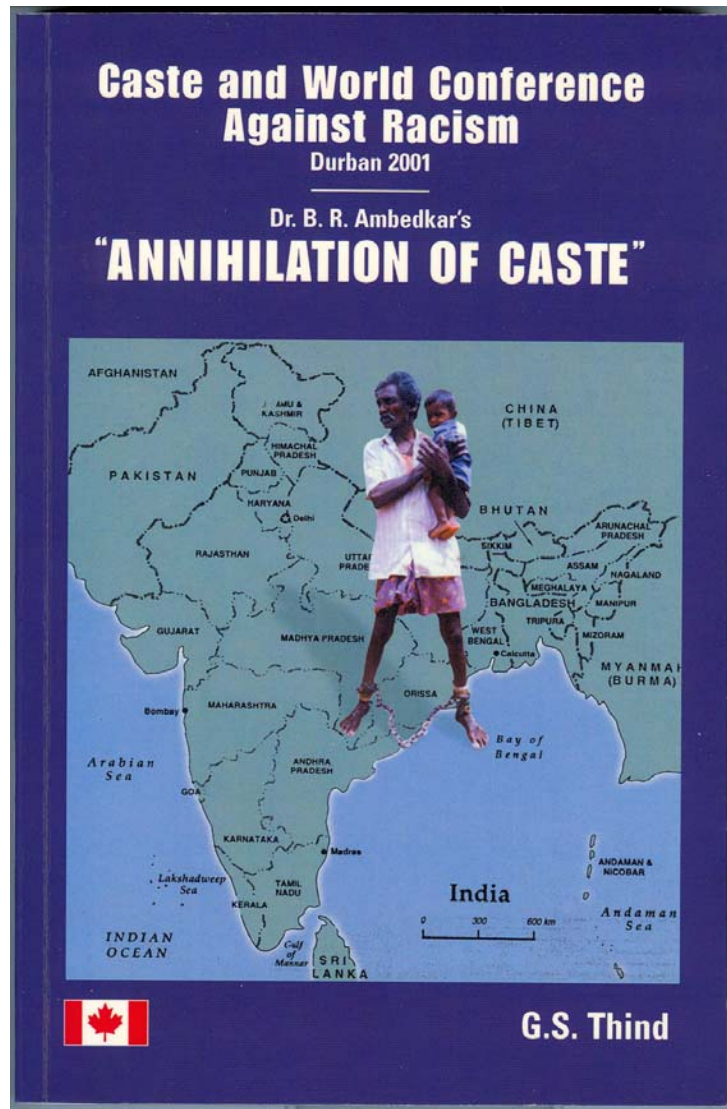


TOP COVER
Chained bonded labourer in India.



(Back cover)
Chained men who worked dawn to dusk in a quarry in India.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's
"ANNIHILATION OF CASTE"

Even stonehearted Osama bin Laden's spine will shiver if he sees bonded labour in 21st century India. Venkatesh (see photo on front cover) crushed half a tractor load of stones from dawn to dusk in a stone quarry at Arakere, near Srirangapatnam, making Rs. 55 (Can. \$1.90) a day. His troubles began when he borrowed Rs. 4,250 (Can. \$167.00) from his employer, Puttaswamy Gowda. According to Venkatesh, as he paid back more than Rs. 10,000 (Can. \$362.00) including interest and wanted to quit, Gowda instructed his goons to beat him severely, chain him and put him back to work because he still owed Rs. 7,000 (Can. \$241.00).

Encouraged by his success in chaining Venkatesh, Gowda chained his four other *Dalit* workers; Gopal, Venkatachala, Nagaraju and Krishna, who also owed him anywhere from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000. These amounts had multiplied from Rs. 50 to Rs. 1,000 by simply changing digits. The chained men's luck turned around when Lokesh, a civic election campaigner, barged into a hut in the quarry to distribute pamphlets despite resistance from Gowda's goons. Lokesh reported the inhumane treatment to Nanjunde Gowda, his campaign leader, who in turn planned a rescue operation with the help of lawyer K. Murthy. In a dramatic move, 60 campaigners, accompanied by journalists, cameramen and filmmakers broke through the main gate of the quarry on June 21, 2000 and rescued the chained men.

(Source: www.ambedkar.org)



Chained men who worked dawn to dusk in a quarry.

PART - I

**CASTE AND WORLD CONFERENCE
AGAINST
RACISM (DURBAN, 2001)**

TENTACLES OF CASTE SYSTEM.

CAN CASTE BE KILLED?

PART...II

ARTICLE...II

**DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR'S
'ANNIHILATION OF CASTE'
Article I. WITH
EDITOR'S COMMENTARY
(IN THE FORM OF FOOTNOTES)**

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Author:

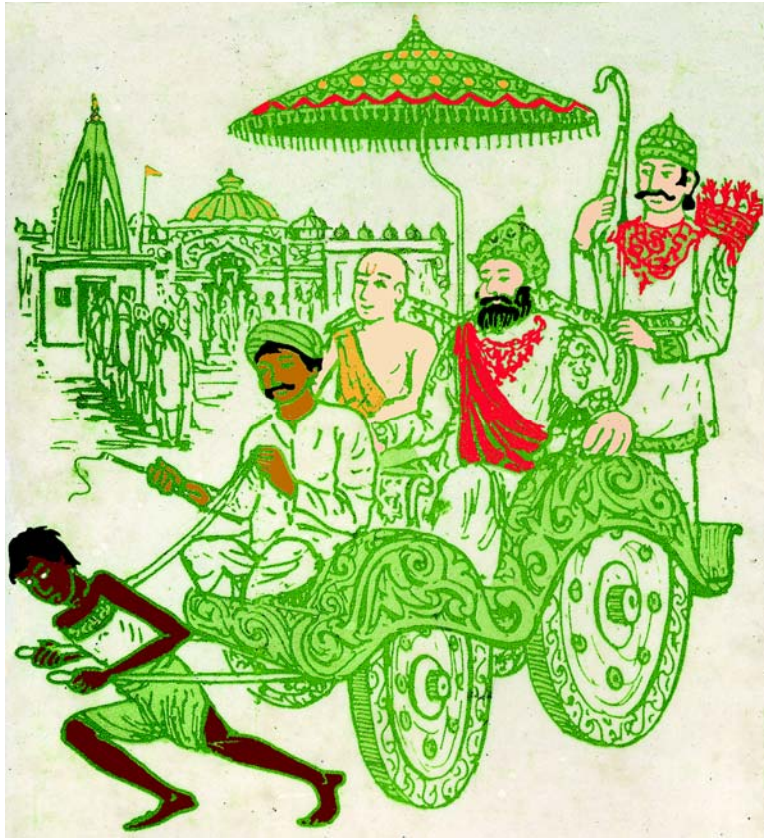
G. Thind

(Also Publisher and Author of

‘Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage’ ISBN 0-9688162-0-7)

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SHAMEFUL CASTE SYSTEM OF INDIA



SKETCH SHOWING CLASSICAL ROLES
OF
DIFFERENT CASTES

The sketch shows classical roles of the four castes as prescribed in *Manusmriti*. The whole burden is being pulled by the *Shudra* who is driven by *Vaishiys*, with *Brahmin* and *Kshatriya* sitting tight in their seats with an attendant at the back stand.

(Reproduction from '*Hindu Scheme of Things*' by Dr. S. L. Dhani.)

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SHUDRA MAN AND WOMAN WITH BROOMS.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

Let me describe chronologically how this book came to be published in its present form, both in respect of matter and arrangement.

Dr. Ambedkar's book 'Annihilation of Caste' is now a classic on caste system and should be read by every Indian who wants India to be a modern nation. It is a must for every *Dalit* who wants to know who he/she is and why and how he/she can regain his/her honour.

I had a great desire to place into the hands of the public another reprint of the DR. Ambedkar's book but with some more matter as addendum to the book. So I added my own explanatory notes where I felt that something more needed to be said to bring out clearly what the learned author had meant. For example Dr. Ambedkar had said at more than one place that the Sikhs have no caste system. He was misinformed on this as the Sikhs observe caste system and untouchability as much as the Hindus. There are also occasions to compare and contrast the Hindu society with the Western society, and update what the learned doctor said in 1936. I also added biographical notes about authorities quoted by Dr. Ambedkar to show what intellectual company he enjoyed.

For reasons given in the opening paragraphs thereof, two more contributed articles were added viz 'Tentacles of Caste System' and 'Can Caste Be Killed?' The first article describes the mechanism of caste system and its ramifications for the *Dalits*, how they have been exploited and marginalized throughout history in the Indian society. It traces briefly caste system as adumbrated in *Manusmriti* down to its disguised practice in modern times. The second article explains how efforts at social and religious reforms have failed in the past to ameliorate the condition of the *Dalits*, what are the hurdles in the way and offers some suggestions, which if implemented, will go a long way in removing the rigours of caste system.

The above two articles were to appear as addenda to Dr. Ambedkar's book. But before the book as then compiled could be sent to the press, the UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was held at Durban (South Africa) in August/September, 2001, and the material relating to the caste as an issue at that conference began to appear in the Internet. Although the material was quite interesting and illuminating, very little of it appeared in the press in India and abroad. We therefore thought of preserving the broad details of the happenings at the Conference relating to this issue and also what transpired in relation to this Conference in India. The whole of this material appearing on the Internet was gone through, sifted, pruned and condensed and organized as a well rounded-off essay comprising of the following:-

1. General information about the Conference and its procedures, the expectations of the *Dalits* from this Conference.
2. The attitude of the Government of India towards the issue of caste being taken to the Conference and action taken by it.
3. Views of the chairman of National H. R. Commission (India) and how the Government ignored those views.
4. Caste verses racism – Are they different or are they two sides of the same coin?
5. Why the Government of India was opposed to the caste issue being taken to the Conference.
6. The role played by the *Dalit* activists in highlighting the issue nationally and internationally as worthy of being discussed at the Conference.
7. The topic of caste as handled at the Preparatory Committee meetings and the role of the *Dalit* delegates thereat and what transpired at the Conference – the zigzag battle between the proponents and opponents of the resolution.
8. The gains and the losses at the Conference for *Dalits* and Government of India.
9. Role of the Indian Press vis-à-vis the Conference.
10. The speech of the chief of the Government of India delegation and para-wise comments on the same.

At that stage of compiling the book, it was realized that these three articles could not be accommodated as addenda to Dr. Ambedkar's book. The whole matter was therefore rearranged as it now appears in this book.

A glossary of India terms used in this book has been added to this addition especially for those who do not know Hindi.

Some photographs have been added to the book. Dr. Hari Sharma, ex-professor of Simon Fraser University, has provided four photographs with poems. Two photographs (front and back for cover) have been provided by Mr. Sita Ram Ahir. He also provided material from his internet library for preparing the article on Durban Conference. My thanks are due to both of them.

I solicit indulgence of Praful Bidwai and Kuldip Nayar for inclusion of their articles '*Dalit*, Race and Human Rights' and '*Dalits*, Durban and a Lost Chance' respectively in this edition.

I am thankful to Mr. Mohan Gill of Yuba City, California, for providing monetary help without which this book could not have been published.

I am grateful to Mr. Khushi Ram, ex-Deputy Secretary, Union Public Service Commission (India) and also briefly Deputy Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Government of India, now living in Vancouver, for his invaluable contribution in bringing out this edition.

Gian S. Thind,
Burnaby, British Columbia,
Canada
March 5, 2002



Madurai, Tamil Nadu.

LANDLESS

(Dr. Hari Sharma)

Go away!
YOU!!

What do you want?
Season after season
we see you.
The likes of you.

What do you want to know?
Caste?
no, we are Outcastes.

Food?
hardly.

Home?
if you call it so.

Land?
no. No. NO.

Listen!
Do you want to know something?
Give us land.
Some land.

Not promises, but land.
Land, we can call our own.
Land, with no landlord.
Land, we could work on.
Land, whose product we
could own.
So, no one could throw us out
burn our homes
rape our women
roast us alive.

Yes, give us land.
Then we will have food.
Clothes.
Home.
Dignity.

Maybe, we will have a Caste,
too.

Right now,
We have nothing.
We are landless.

PART – I
THE CASTE ISSUE AND
THE THIRD U.N. WORLD CONFERENCE
AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND
RELATED INTOLERANCE (WCAR), HELD
AT DURBAN (SOUTH AFRICA) FROM 31
AUGUST TO 7 SEPTEMBER 2001.

Compiled by Khushi Ram & G. S. Thind

“Noble is your aim and sublime and glorious is your mission. Blest are those who are awakened to their duty to those amongst whom they are born. Glory to those who devote their time, talent and their all to the amelioration of slavery; glory to those who will reap their struggle for the liberation of the enslaved in spite of heavy odds, carping humiliation, storms and dangers till the downtrodden secure their human rights.” (Dr. B. R. Ambedkar)

I

In 1997, as a part of the Third Decade to combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the UN General Assembly decided to convene a World Conference on the issue not later than 2001. The Conference was held under the aegis of the UN Human Rights Commission, from 31st August to 7th September 2001 at Durban as World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR). The first two such conferences were held in 1978 and 1983 and mainly focused on ending the apartheid in South Africa. At the third conference the member states of the UN were to focus on the causes and the consequences of the various manifestations of racism (oppression based on colour, ethnicity, religious and political differences etc., whether state sponsored or perpetrated by dominant section of a society), on strengthening existing Human Rights mechanism and UN conventions such as CERD (Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial

Discrimination) and developing practical, action-oriented measures and strategies to combat contemporary forms of Racism and Intolerance. At the close of the World Conference, the member states adopted a formal declaration (i.e. statement of principles), program of action and the means of implementation.

WCAR consisted of both Intergovernmental (IG) Conference and a parallel Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Forum. In the former, the governments of the UN member states were the decision makers, while the NGOs primarily participated as lobbyists, observers and information providers. Although NGOs did not have the right to vote at the IG Conference, they had a variety of opportunities to influence the agenda, direction and outcome of the Conference. At the IG Conference the *Dalit* NGOs from India met and lobbied with Government of India delegation to the WCAR as well as with foreign government delegations. They collaborated with NGO delegates from other countries and they also met with influential UN officials such as members of CERD and various Human Rights Commissions and the UN sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The NGO Forum provided a platform for the NGOs from various countries to give voice and visibility to forms of racism they suffer from that are currently rendered invisible or out-rightly denied by the governments concerned. The *Dalit* NGO delegates were one such group whose activities were co-ordinated by NCDHR (National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights). The Government of India had its own delegates, official and non-official.

From the *Dalit* perspective WCAR was once in life time opportunity to ventilate their grievances to the jury of world opinion. It was very relevant to the work of the *Dalit* Activists in as much as one of the core theme which was addressed at the Conference was the issue of “Work and Descent based Discrimination”. Under this theme there could be ample scope for the WCAR to address the issue of caste discrimination against *Dalits* of India, which is based both on birth and work. It is a matter of regret that this issue did not come up for formal

decision at the I. G. Conference due to the machinations of the Government of India delegation and lack of time, but the matter was highlighted a lot at earlier discussions.

Prior to the actual conference, much work had already been done through preparatory meetings, conferences and consultations at which governments and NGOs formulated the agenda, negotiated the contents of major conference documents, and established procedures.

The most important of these contemporary events were the WCAR Preparatory Committee meetings. The first PrepCom meeting was held on 1-5 May 2000 in Geneva at which the venue and dates of the conference were set and a rudimentary agenda and rules of procedure were formulated. The second PrepCom meeting was held in May 2001 at which the official Conference agenda was decided upon and large part of the contents of the final Conference documents were finalised. The third PrepCom meeting was held at Geneva on July 30-August 10, 2001.

In between the PrepCom meetings, various governments or inter governmental organizations convened meetings at the regional level at which they developed regional agenda and program of work for the conference. The Asia Regional Preparatory meeting was convened in Tehran in February 2001. The NGO Asian Regional Coordination Committee organized a parallel NGO Forum at the same time and place. NCDHR took part in this Forum and also in other NGO meetings (like the one held at Kathmandu in April 2001) and also in the third PrepCom.

Participating in the WCAR were 2300 representatives from 163 countries including 16 Heads of State, 58 foreign ministers and 44 ministers. Nearly 4000 representatives of NGOs and over 1100 media representatives were accredited. The Government of India was represented by a delegation consisting of officials and non-officials led by Omar Abdullah, Minister of State for External Affairs. As stated earlier, the activities of the *Dalit* NGOs from India were coordinated by NCDHR. The role of the *Dalit* NGOs was commendable, appreciated and supported by NGO delegates from other countries and some government

delegates also. The *Dalit* Drum was a popular rallying point for all NGOs who danced around it.

II

Being a founder member of the UN and having adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1949 and having ratified various conventions like the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and Convention for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), it was supposed that India would agree to Caste issue being discussed as a kind of racial discrimination at the WCAR. The Government of India's stand, however, was that question of Caste does not fall within the ambit of Racism Conference and that issue of Caste based discrimination should be kept within the national jurisdiction and not taken to any international forum as India has enabling environments within the country such as judiciary and executive to tackle the issue (these are bogus arguments as will be shown later).

It may be stated that the Government of India did not enjoy consensus support within the country to deny the inclusion of such a major issue at the WCAR. It did not bring up this issue before the parliament or before the cabinet. If it had done, at least some members of the parliament or *Dalit* cabinet ministers would have given their views supporting the idea of caste being discussed at WCAR. Perhaps the Government knew that there would be division in the parliament as well as in the cabinet. Arguments and counter arguments in the parliament could have also attracted the attention of the Press, both in India and abroad, to the caste system prevalent in India, and the *Brahmin*-dominated Government of India wanted to avoid the same. Obviously this was not a small issue to be decided only at the secretary-level committees, but the Government resorted to that safe short cut. The result was that it was bureaucracy, (which is *Brahmin*-dominated and which has been the major beneficiary of the caste inequality in the country) which was dead set to oppose the inclusion of caste discrimination on the agenda of the WCAR, that was allowed to have full play on this issue. It

benefits in many ways by the *status quo*. It is not fulfilling the *Dalit* quota of services and posts in the government offices on one pretext or the other and enjoying the unfulfilled quota. It does not implement properly the laws meant for amelioration of the condition of the *Dalits* and there is no body to question their role. Naturally they wanted to avoid any international scrutiny of the reality on the ground.

The Government of India, instead, to ascertain public opinion (more as an eye wash) on the question of including caste on the agenda of the WCAR, constituted a National Committee consisting of ten members headed by Ranganath Mishra (A Brahmin by caste). It held three meetings at Delhi (7th February, 2001), at Hyderabad (4th of June) and again at Delhi in August 2001. The attendance at these meetings held behind closed doors was very thin and the *Dalits* demonstrated outside the meeting halls for inclusion of the caste issue in the agenda of the WCAR. Mr. Jaswant Singh, Minister for Foreign Affairs as Chairman of the Committee, gave a lead to the committee while inaugurating the conference in Delhi in February 2001, stressing the need for the countries to adhere to the primary mandate of the WCAR, viz. the specific issue of Racism, which according to him, is different from caste-ism. "We are opposed to discrimination in any form. But Racism should not be confused with discrimination in general which is not within the purview of the World Conference," he said. As expected the committee agreed with the government stand not to allow the caste issue being discussed at the Durban Conference, as it felt satisfied with the constitutional and legislative provisions against any form of discrimination and the affirmative action programs already in place. Various *Dalit* organizations did not agree with this stand of the government and agitated all along for the caste issue to be discussed at the WCAR.

III

India has a National Human Rights Commission and caste system is a matter of human rights. Let us see what Mr. J. S. Verma, chairman of the commission, had to say about this. He

debunked the government of India's position that caste is a 'domestic issue'. He withdrew from the official government delegation to Durban Conference because of the government's opposition to the caste issue being discussed at the Conference. According to him 'This conference provides a singular opportunity to the international community to deal openly and courageously with the vexed issues of discrimination and inequality as they exist all over the world, in all their variety, including the forms of discrimination that persists in India.' According to him 'Durban might give you a platform to discuss and bring home new ideas to tackle the menace-----.' He attended the conference as an independent observer.

The following are the relevant extracts from an interview granted by him towards the end of August 2001:-

Question: The NHRC has taken a view contrary to the government's on caste. Why?

Answer: No one can dispute that discrimination based on caste or any form of caste-ism is a serious violation of human rights. And in the Indian context, it is a flagrant violation of the Constitutional guarantee of equality. Article 15 expressly mentions both race and caste as grounds of discrimination. So for practical purposes, I don't see any need to go into the question whether caste-ism amounts to racism or not. Whether it does or not, it is something that needs to be eradicated and it is the job of every institution of governance to work in that direction.

Question: But should it be taken to international fora?

Answer: This being a human rights issue, the violation being there in practice and since human rights issues are not confined to national boundaries alone, all human rights issues can be discussed at international fora as well. I personally have no problem with this issue being discussed at Durban. I don't consider the need to go into the semantics. It is a serious human rights violation and we are concerned with the human rights issues.

Question: What was the reason behind the government's stand?

Answers: The Government of India may have many other reasons, political considerations, etc. I am only concerned about

the human rights issue. And the real solution to that is economic empowerment of the people at all levels.

X X X X X X X

Question: What are the general attitudes of officials towards human rights violations?

Answer: It is like when you are at the receiving end then you appreciate everything. But when you are on the other side, then you feel talking of human rights is a nuisance.

X X X X X X X

Question: But won't raising rights issues abroad show India in a bad light?

Answer: That is only if there is an irrevocable basis to think that instruments of governance and agencies here are lax. But not when the judiciary and the NHRC are monitoring human rights situation and punishing the guilty.

The NHRC's support for inclusion of the caste issue, contrary to the Government's stand, in the agenda of the WCAR came in for praise by the UN Human Rights Commission, Mrs. Mary Robinson, who said during the Conference that for the first time the matter had been highlighted at the international forum. "I congratulate the principled stand taken by the NHRC, which stood up to the help of the *Dalits* and extended moral support," said the UN HRC chief. "The NGOs have raised what they called discrimination against *Dalits* in India, and the issue has been brought before the international community," she said.

As stated above the graded inequality of caste system, especially the hardships faced by the untouchables, is a fit subject for the NHRC to investigate and make suitable recommendations for necessary action by the Government of India. Dalit rights are Human Rights. Most of the cases of caste-based discrimination attract his attention. His advice, therefore, should have been given due weight-age by the Government of India in deciding whether the issue of caste was a fit case to be

discussed at the WCAR. The Government of India, however, rejected his advice and decided to the contrary.

IV

Thus there was a lot of controversy whether caste can be equated with race, as the conference at Durban was to deal with

‘racism’ and not with caste as such. Let us see what the real position is.

It seems caste is race plus. Caste touches all aspects of Indian life in a highly discriminatory way. Inflicted by birth, sanctified by religion and glorified by tradition, caste has brutal repercussions for the *Dalits* of India for generations together. It is idle to argue that caste is not race; caste system is worse than racism.

The very fact that according to *Purusha Sukta* of *Rig Veda*, Hindus were produced from different parts of the body of *Brahma*, shows that they were different races because they were given different body colours too – *Brahmins* being white, *Kshatriyas* being red, the *Vaishyas* being yellow and the *Shudras* being black. All the *Smritis* preach *Varna Vayavastha* and this phrase means ‘system according to the colour scheme of humans involved’ Caste laws are highly discriminatory. So caste system in India is hidden apartheid.

According to the New Shorter Oxford Dictionary, the word ‘apartheid’ is an Afrikaans word literally meaning ‘separateness’. This word is derived from the Dutch word ‘apart’ and ‘heid’ meaning ‘hood’. Therefore the word ‘apartheid’ literally means ‘apart-hood’. So any separateness or segregation that keeps castes apart is also apartheid. The Hindus are born in castes with different rights and deprivation, work in castes, marry in castes, die in castes and are even buried in caste cemeteries always apart. A nation, which took pride in inviting Nelson Mandela, the hero of the battle against apartheid in South Africa, should not have pushed the caste-apartheid under the carpet.

The object of the World Conference against Racism was to promote egalitarianism and to eradicate all forms of

discrimination based on work and descent. Caste is undoubtedly one such form of discrimination. It has work as well as descent as its foundation. Its very existence is a shame and a blot on humanity. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". In article 2, it prohibits discrimination, *inter alia*, on grounds of social origin, birth or any other status. Similarly International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, 1966, prohibit discrimination, *inter alia*, on any ground similar to those mentioned above. India being a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, should not have opposed a discussion by a world conference to combat racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, all the three surely being hallmarks of caste system.

This controversy need not bog us down because Caste is a very complex phenomenon. No single theory can conclusively establish its foundations. For our present purpose we are to be guided by the expanded definition of racial discrimination as contained in Article 1 of the "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" (CERD) adopted by the United Nation General Assembly Resolution on December 21, 1965. Article 1 reads: –

"1. In this Convention, the term 'racial discrimination' shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."

The above definition very much embraces caste system. The Indian legal system has also recognized the existence of discrimination in Indian society based on caste as a form of racial discrimination. The Constitution of India also recognizes the existence of racial discrimination on the basis of descent and occupation and this issue has been the subject matter of a number of legislative measures. The Protection of Civil Rights Act (1955, 1976) and the SC/ST Atrocities Act (1989) underlie

this understanding. There are a number of decisions of the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts of different states describing caste discrimination as a sort of racial discrimination. (For details please see enclosure A to this essay).

What is the actual position of the Untouchables of India, the worst victims of caste discrimination? What has caste done to the Untouchables through its discriminatory apparatus on the lines of apartheid of South Africa?

V

Why was the government of India unwilling to discuss caste at the Durban conference, in spite of the legal position and the ground reality?

There seems to be a fear in the Indian Establishment, particularly among the ruling upper caste elite, that such an international scrutiny will expose the tradition-bound society's failure in eliminating this thousands year old evil of caste and untouchability and the failure of the Indian government in ensuring implementation of Constitutional safeguards for victims of caste segregation, persecution and domination. The relevant statistics are so revealing and so damaging to the powers-that-be.

There is also the lurking fear that bringing the subject from under the carpet to the light of the day on the world stage will embolden and empower the still stifled voice of the *Dalit* community.

It is the same vested interests, viz. the bureaucracy (that slows down the implementation of affirmative legislation already on the books of the Government of India, on one pretext of the other) that stood against the caste issue being discussed at the Conference. The caste system has developed a large amount of socio-economic vested interest and any changes will affect the existing socio-economic order. The ruling castes who have monopoly of government services, armed forces and economic system, do not want the *Dalits* to have a share in these spheres which may have to be accepted if the UN interferes.

All the holy books of the Hindus sanction caste system and there is no book that criticizes caste system. Caste system is

the part and parcel of Hinduism. Any attack on caste system is likely to expose the weakness of Hinduism particularly its behaviour towards *Dalits* who follow Hinduism. The Indian name for caste system is *varna vayavastha*. *Varna* means skin colour and leads directly to an idea of racism which the government has been denying all the time.

The government of India does not want outside interference in its affairs, and does not want to be frequently pulled up by the UN agencies, and required to submit its reports to them and thus exposing itself to the world ridicule.

VI

What role did the *Dalits* of India play in this discussion whether caste should be discussed at the Durban conference?

As soon as they came to know that the government was against the caste issue being discussed at the Durban conference, they began to agitate both in India and abroad. Awakening amongst the *Dalits* within India started with the political career of Dr. Ambedkar but in the international field it is of recent origin. Since the 1980s, because of the good work done by Dr. Laxmi Berwa, M.D., of New York (founder of VISION-Volunteers In Service to India's Oppressed and Neglected) and also of Yogesh Warhade (founder of Ambedkar Mission in Toronto), the *Dalits* began to raise the issue of caste system in appropriate forums of the UN. T. Hirekar of UK also began to work on similar lines and thus gradually a worldwide *Dalit* movement began to take shape.

So far as the activities of the *Dalits* in connection with the WCAR are concerned, we can divide them into two parts – conferences and meetings arranged in India/abroad and important articles and press releases relating to the issue of caste at that Conference. The meetings in India were mostly organized under the aegis of the National Campaign for *Dalit* Human Rights - (NCDHR) (Head Office at Secandrabad – Andhra Pradesh) formed in 1998. Its national convener is Martin MacCwan, a social activist of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It has its branch offices in some foreign countries too, apart from branches

in all the major States of India. It is this organization that coordinated the activities of the NGO *Dalit* delegates at WCAR.

The NCDHR, through its international network brought to the notice of the world that caste discrimination is a phenomenon widely spread across South Asia region and is not limited to Indian soil. It succeeded in establishing a common link wherever there is untouchability based on work and descent. The NGO representatives from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, Japan and Nigeria etc. formed into an international *Dalit* human rights network to fight against the evil of the caste discrimination. This was to defeat the Government of India's stand that caste is an 'internal issue' of India.

Meetings were held by the NCDHR all over the country. A special mention needs to be made of the Global Conference Against Caste Discrimination (G.C.) held in Delhi from 1-4 March 2001. It was inaugurated by I. K. Gujral, former Prime Minister of India, who said "*Dalits*, through their labour, remain the backbone of our economy. Yet their rights are not adequately protected.....". Over three hundred delegates attended the Conference from India and abroad. Its theme was occupation and descent based discrimination against *Dalits* as violation of International Human Rights law. Human Rights activists from Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Africa, Germany, USA, UK, Holland and Japan attended this conference. The following personalities attending the GC deserve special mention:

Rajendere Goonesekere participated in the GC in his capacity as Expert member of the UN-Sub-Commission dealing with discrimination against *Dalits*, Buraku people, the OZU of Nigeria etc.

R. V Pillai, the UN CERD member and former general secretary of the National Human Rights Commission Milloon Kothari, UN Special Rapporteur on Housing.
Narandran Kollapen, the South African Commissioner for Human Rights.

Yuka Ishikawa of Human Rights, Osaka, Japan.

Nimalka Fernando, Asia Pacific WCAR NGO coordinator from Sri Lanka.

Dr. Asgar Ali Engineer, Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai.

Dr. Munekar, Mumbai University Vice-Chancellor

The GC declared caste-related discrimination based on occupation and descent as a global phenomenon and called for a global initiative to combat this major source of Human Rights violations.

By the end of GC, the delegates drafted a declaration (consisting of 17 articles) on abolishing caste-based discrimination related to occupation and descent, addressed to the WCAR, UN and Governments. The Declaration affirmed, *inter alia*, that caste, as a basis for segregation and oppression of people in terms of their descent and occupation, is a form of apartheid and a distinct form of Racism. It also condemned the attempts of the Government of India to oppose the inclusion of caste-based discrimination in the agenda of the WCAR. At the international level, the GC called upon the UN to:

*Declare that Untouchability is crime against humanity.

*Include caste-based discrimination on the agenda, declaration and programme of action of the WCAR.

*Appoint a UN Special Rapporteur on caste-based discrimination.

At the national level, it called upon the governments (through its program of action consisting of 19 items) *inter-alia*, to enforce and implement an effective and time bound programme to abolish Untouchability and similar practices in all spheres, and to enact and enforce laws relating to compulsory free primary education and elimination of child labour, bonded labour, manual scavenging and other practices that disproportionately and adversely affect *Dalits*. On July 3rd 2001, to mark the *Global Day of Action for Dalits*, mass conferences were held all over the country including the one at Delhi. In New Delhi the *Dalits* demonstrated at the office of the UN that WCAR discuss the issue of caste and violence that caste-ism has inflicted on the person and human dignity of hundreds of

millions of people in several countries of Asia and other continents for thousands of years. A memorandum was handed over to the representative of the UN. A group of *Dalits* marched to the Parliament House where they submitted a copy of the memorandum to the secretary of the Prime Minister.

A society called “Durban *Abhyan*” organized a meeting on July 25, 2001, at Delhi on the subject of discrimination faced by *Dalits* and the forthcoming WCAR. It disputed Indian Government’s contention that caste-ism is an internal matter of the country having no relevance at the international level.

On August 3, 2001, the National Law School of India University and National Human Rights Commission jointly organized a seminar on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. NHRC chairman, J. S. Varma, inaugurated it. Important delegates considered that caste should be discussed at WCAR. Professor N. R. Madhava Menon, Vice-Chancellor of National University of Juridical Sciences and Professor Devanoora Mahadeva, a member of the National Committee on Racism, were prominent speakers. Prof. Mahadeva in his long speech, placed before the Seminar, *intelia*, the following as his personal opinion:

“.....The problem of the Untouchable Community in India which has been excluded from the social system because of birth and has been subjected to discrimination, distinction, exclusion, prevention and restriction and also they were imposed to take up ‘lowly professions’: naturally these issues have to be discussed at the World Conference. But the Government of India is not agreeable to this and is arguing that ‘discrimination by descent’ has to be interpreted as pertaining to only race related discrimination in the narrow restricted sense bound to the physical characteristics as it is used by popular anthropologists. If we accept this argument of the Government of India, we would be rejecting the United Nations’ concept ‘there is only one race – the human race.’ This is the crisis before us.”

The *Dalit* Solidarity Network and the Voice of *Dalit* International held demonstrations at the India High Commission in London on 2nd July 2001, condemning the attempt to oppose

the inclusion of caste-based discrimination in agenda of the WCAR. Similar demonstrations were held at the Indian Embassy in Washington, D.C., on July 3rd 2001 by Ambedkar Memorial Trust of America.

Elsewhere in Asia demonstrations were held outside the Indian Embassy in Manila (Philippines) and in Hong Kong at the

Indian Consulate. Protests were also held in Australia, Canada, Denmark and Cities of New York and Chicago in USA.

On 5th September 2001, the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organizations of UK (London) held a meeting and sent a long letter to the Project Coordinator of the Conference describing the plight of the *Dalits* and pleaded WCAR to set up a fact finding commission which should look into the miseries of the Untouchables and monitor the practice of Untouchability by higher castes.

The following important articles/press releases on the issue appeared in India and abroad:

On 26th July 2001, a damning Amnesty International report on racism around the world attacked India for its “hidden apartheid” against 160 million *Dalits* who belong to the socially unprivileged classes. “Despite the abolition of untouchability (on paper) the *Dalits* continue to be discriminated on the basis of descent.....they are marginalized, particularly in rural areas....among the violations persistently reported are torture including rape, arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial executions....”

Again on August 30th 2001, another press release by the Amnesty International said “the plight of millions of *Dalits*, suffering discrimination on the basis of descent, has yet to be recognized by the draft documents (of WCAR).”

Asia Human Rights Watch report released in Durban on August 29, 2001, related in part the plight of *Dalits* in India: “...untouchables may not cross the line dividing their part of the village from that occupied by higher caste....they may not use the same wells, visit the same temples or drink from the same cups in tea-stalls. *Dalit* children are frequently made to sit at the back of the classrooms. In what has been called India’s

‘hidden apartheid’, entire villages in many Indian states remain completely segregated by caste.” “.....untouchability is reinforced by state allocation of resources and facilities. Separate facilities are provided for separate caste-based neighborhoods. In many villages the state administration installs electricity, sanitation facilities and water pumps in upper caste section but neglects to do the same in the neighboring segregated *Dalit* area”. The report urged the WCAR to include in its Deceleration,

a section about *Dalit* and other low caste people in other South Asian countries.

An article by Rama Lakshmi in Washington Post of June 11, 2001, related the *Dalit* experience of atrocities in South Indian village named Kheecha and said, “while the Indian Government acknowledges the problem, it insists they are not racial. The Government wants to avoid the international visibility that the Durban Conference would give to the caste issue.”

The Philippine Star of 5th June 2001, urged the Government of India to reverse their stand and to enable the caste issue being discussed at the WCAR in order to eradicate caste discrimination through out the world. It stated that untouchability, incomprehensible atrocities, denial of land and housing, rape and murder with impunity, and restrictions to the most dehumanized and underpaid work are some of the serious forms of discrimination that characterize the condition of 160 million Indian *Dalits* and several more around the world.

Human Right Watch (New York) issued a Press note on August 29th 2001, mentioning about its 60-page report entitled “Caste Discrimination – A Global Concern” focusing on the *Dalit*/Untouchability in South Asia and countries like Japan and Nigeria. It said that caste-based discrimination blights the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world, and that the WCAR should have the issue squarely on its agenda. It alleged “Government had tried to censor discussion of caste at the Conference and at all preparatory meetings leading up to it. India has used political and economic influence over other countries to

pressure them into partnership of silence..... . Caste denotes a system of rigid social stratification into ranked groups defined by descent and occupation. Under various caste systems throughout the world, caste divisions also dominate in housing, marriage and general social interaction-divisions that are reinforced through the threat of social ostracism, economic boycotts and even physical violence.”

The Daily Pioneer of Delhi also carried some articles/news about the *Dalit* issue in the context of the WCAR.

VII

As stated above the government of India argued that caste was an internal matter of Indian society and therefore it should not be discussed at the WCAR. On the other hand the *Dalit* organizations were pursuing the matter wherever the issue came up for discussion by the WCAR Agencies. Let us follow this zigzag battle.

A regional preparatory meeting of the PrepCom was held at Tehran (Iran) in February 2001, and it witnessed an intense campaign by the *Dalit* NGOs for the expansion of the definition of racism to include “discrimination based on work and descent.” The terms caste or *Dalit* were however not included in the final resolution adopted in this meet. The government of India’s view was that it would dilute the Durban conference’s focus on racism.

An exclusive UN NGOs meeting was convened in Kathmandu in April 2001 to discuss and further refine the NGO declaration on racial discrimination and related intolerance prepared at Tehran. This further strengthened the issue of caste discrimination as an important point to be discussed at Durban.

Glimmering signs of support for the *Dalit* issue in the WCAR and beyond appeared in European Union on May 14 and 15, 2001, in Strasbourg and Brussels, respectively. Several members of the International *Dalit* Solidarity Network met with Members of the European Parliament, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Embassy, the IDSN impressed upon them the need for the EU member countries to take lead in breaking the wall of silence on the caste issue in the WCAR. As

a result, the Green Coalition drafted the following amendment to the EU Parliamentary Human Rights Report:

“Urges the EU Member States in view of the World Conference to affirm that discrimination on the basis of work and descent represents a strong obstacle to the realisation of the civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of members of the affected communities, mainly in relation to the caste systems in South Asia; calls on the European Commission to systematically screen EU aid programmes for its effects on the population concerned by such discrimination and encourages Governments concerned to undertake public awareness-raising campaigns and educational initiatives in order to promote positive changes in attitudes.”

The *Dalit* Caucus, during the Intercessional Working Group Meeting (11-17 May 2001), was successful in getting the Government of Switzerland endorse the following amendment to the draft declaration for the WCAR.

“To ensure that all necessary constitutional, legislative and administrative measures, including appropriate forms of affirmative action, are in place to prohibit and redress discrimination on the basis of work and descent, and that such measures are respected and implemented by all state authorities at all levels.” (new para 109 – Switzerland)

At the end of the Plenary, Barbados also endorsed an amendment to the Draft Program of Action. Unlike the amendment endorsed by Switzerland, this one contained a reference to the ‘caste system’ as well as to work and descent based discrimination. This amendment reads:

“The World Conference affirms that discrimination on the basis of work and descent involves a complex and deeply entrenched obstacle to the realization of the civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of the members of the affected communities, and that while most closely associated with caste system in South Asia, this type of discrimination is encountered in the other parts of the world as well. The World Conference therefore:- a) Calls upon the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to undertake an

in-depth study of the question of discrimination on the basis of work and descent, in cooperation with the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. b) Encourages Governments concerned to undertake public awareness raising and educational initiatives in order to promote positive changes in attitudes towards and within communities discriminated against on the basis of work and descent.”

However, this success of the *Dalits* was short lived. When the Draft Program of Action came up for negotiation at the start of the second PrepCom this paragraph was missing. The *Dalit Caucus* raised the issue of its dubious disappearance before the International Steering Committee (ISC) and High Commissioner Ms. Mary Robinson. After looking into the matter the ISC stated that the said Government had withdrawn its amendment. This amendment was allegedly withdrawn by Barbados under pressure from India.

The second PrepCom was held in May 2001, in Geneva where the governments declined to discuss caste issue. However, one gain of the work done by the *Dalit* NGOs was that UNHRC, Ms. Mary Robinson, agreed that both the views, that of the Government and the NGOs, should be presented at the Conference. The NGOs committed themselves to make it one of their main issues to be addressed at the parallel NGO WCAR Forum. Building on the draft formulated in the NGO preparatory meetings held in Tehran and Kathmandu, the NGO draft Declaration and Programme of Action emerging out of the Geneva meeting contained numerous strong and explicit references to the issues of caste, *Dalits* and ‘untouchability’. Below are given the important excerpts relating to caste from the NGO statement:

“Recognizing that caste is an intolerance that is a social evil that results in discrimination, Caste-based discrimination places restrictions on the enjoyment of fundamental human rights as well as social and economic mobility and makes them more vulnerable to all forms of violence. In many instances, the problem of discrimination is aggravated by states that fail to

enforce their own laws designed to protect citizens who are victims of a caste system...

“Caste remains as insidious and deeply entrenched form of discrimination on the basis of work and descent, which has particular implications for women, children and youth. Caste and descent-based discrimination affects millions of people, especially in the Asia-Pacific area and Africa. Caste-based discrimination *de facto* continues to deny access to public services including housing, health, land, employment, social services and other resources normally available to citizens of a country as a right...

“Caste discrimination persists in preventing social mobility and interaction. This is made manifest through the segregated housing settlements and cemeteries, access to common drinking water, restaurants, temples and restrictions on marriage amongst other forms of insidious discrimination. In addition, we note with concern that any action taken by lower caste peoples to assert their rights is met with extreme violence such as burning of houses, destruction of crops, social boycott, rape and murder... .”

As a result of the above efforts and lobbying, paragraph included by Switzerland was approved in the PrepCom III (held in Geneva on July 30th to August 10th 2001) as paragraph 73 as under:

“Urges States to ensure that all necessary constitutional, legislative and administrative measures, including appropriate forms of affirmative action, are in place to prohibit and redress discrimination on the basis of work and descent, that such measures are respected and implemented by all State authorities at all levels.”

In the Intergovernmental Conference, India first tried to delete this paragraph but Canada, Norway, Brazil, Holy See, Chile and Syria supported the paragraph in its original form and opposed the deletion of the paragraph. At that the government of India again tried to dilute this paragraph to divert the attention from “Work and Descent”. The new proposed paragraph by India was much diluted in its focus and it reads:

“73. Urges States to ensure that all necessary constitutional, legislative and administrative measures including appropriate forms of affirmative action and positive measures are in place, particularly in areas of education and employment to prohibit and redress discrimination on the basis of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin and that such measures are respected and implemented as necessary.”

The most important change was from the phrase ‘work and descent’ to ‘race, colour, descent’, and that change was very significant for the *Dalits*. Many UN Agencies had asserted indirectly that caste discrimination is a form of racial discrimination on the basis of ‘work and descent’. The Government of India wanted to kill the phrase ‘Work and Descent’ in order to disassociate the resolution from any reference to caste system in the document of the UN. Another reason for the government of India’s amendment seems to be that caste system, as now visible in India, is easily traceable to work as most of the mean, undignified, arduous, dirty and ill-paid work is done by the *Dalits* only and it could be investigated by any outside authority as to why certain communities are largely dependant on certain types of work like scavenging, hides and skins and agriculture labour etc..

It may be stated that on September 1, 2001, Switzerland withdrew its support to this paragraph (obviously under pressure from the Government of India) but Guatemala came out in support of that paragraph and it continued to exist as paragraph 73 in the draft declaration.

In the mean time the *Dalit* NGO delegates did not rest. On September 4, 2001, Asian Human Rights Commission issued a strongly worded statement criticizing India’s attitude and reproduced some extracts from the declaration drafted by the NGOs forum – ‘Caste and Discrimination based on Occupation and Descent’. Its relevant paragraphs are as follows:-

“(19) Caste is a historically entrenched form of discrimination based on Descent and Occupation that results in segregation of communities including the stigmatization of certain of these communities as ‘Untouchables’, allowing for flagrant violation

of Human Rights and dignity of members of these communities and making them, especially women, vulnerable to the most barbaric form of violence.

“(20) Caste discrimination is heinous crime against humanity which is based on a false ideological construct sanctioned by religion and culture which affects 260 million *Dalits* in South Asia as well as others in the Asia Pacific and African Regions at the personal, social and structural levels,

“(21) Untouchability is a manifestation of caste-based discrimination that labels people as “polluted” or “impure”, thereby denying them entry into places of religious worship, assigning them menial and degrading work such as cleaning toilets, skinning and disposal of dead animals, digging graves and sweeping.

“(22) Discriminating practices based on caste – distinction, exclusion and restrictions – deny *Dalits*’ enjoyment of their economic, social, political, cultural and religious rights, exposing the victims to all forms of violence and manifests itself in the segregation of housing settlements and cemeteries, denial of access to common drinking water, restaurants, places of worship, tea stalls (‘two-cup’ system), restrictions on inter-marriage and other insidious measures, all of which inhibit their development as equal.

“(23) Caste discrimination and Untouchability practiced against generations of *Dalits* for centuries together amounts to massive and systematic generational genocide, resulting in the gradual destruction of their individual and collective identity, dignity and self respect.

“(24) Any action or even any sign of an attempt to act by *Dalits* either individually or collectively to assert their rights is met with extreme measures of violence such as burning or destruction of their homes, property and crops, social and economic boycott, rape or gang-rape of *Dalit* women and murdered by dominant caste individuals or groups, police or the bureaucracy, and that in such instances the State often acts with impunity and in connivance with these perpetrators.” Another

press note was issued by the AHRC on September 7, 2001, relevant extract of which is reproduced below:-

“Chanting ‘No World Conference without para 73’ and ‘Don’t sell out the *Dalits*’, the *Dalit* caucus at the WCAR began fasting on September 6 to pressure Government Delegates attending the one-week UN Conference which concludes today (September 7) to include paragraph 73 on caste discrimination in the final draft of the WCAR’s Program of Action.”

The Asia Pacific Caucus at Durban also issued a long statement on September 6th about the caste issue and in its last paragraph reinforced the position that caste is discrimination based on both work and descent:

“Caste-based discrimination is a distinct form of racial discrimination on the basis of work and descent. Caste-based discrimination dehumanises nearly 260 million people in Asia Pacific Region, including *Dalits* in India and Nepal, people born into low caste status in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan and Burakumin in Japan. Untouchability is the most insidious manifestation of caste-based discrimination and continues to the present day. We assert that Untouchability is Crime Against Humanity. We are astounded that only one short paragraph – paragraph 73 of the draft Program of Action – mentions this immense form of discrimination. We call for the retention and strengthening of paragraph 73 on work and descent, which is the last hope for millions of low caste people looking for something positive to come from this conference.”

From the activities of the *Dalit* NGOs related above and from the relevant material in the internet it is clear that the *Dalit* caucus was very visible, well organized, articulate and also numerically strong. They came from all over the world and contributed in their own way to highlight oppression at the hand of higher castes. *Dalit* issue became number one issue in the hallways conferences, private discussion groups, newspapers and TV media amongst the non-*Dalit* NGOs and it proved to be a massive campaign to educate the entire world on the untouchability and caste issues almost on war footing.

Coming back to the I.G. Conference, the fate of para 73 was still hanging in balance, till the day arrived for the Conference to close up. Paragraph 73 could not come up for the formal decision of the Conference and it died its own death in terms of the procedure of the conference described below: -

In case of a dispute between NGOs and government of a particular country, the official governmental delegation is entrusted with the task of leading the debate in the inter-governmental conference, where an NGO has only observer status. The official delegates of various countries can take a stand during the debate and if the 'leader country' is unprepared to relent, any one country or many, can press for voting.

As per UN procedure, the items that could not be discussed by the concluding day would stand 'lapsed'.

Since countries like Chile, Norway, Guatemala and Canada were expressing their desire for voting, the only option India could think of was to somehow ensure that paragraph 73 lapsed for want of time.

The WCAR was officially concluded by September 7, 2001 evening, but about seven dozen paragraphs could not come up for discussion owing to the stalemate over Middle East (Palestine) and Reparations for slavery.

The WCAR extended the conference by another day, with a warning that all working groups complete discussions on all the paragraphs by September 8, 2001 noon.

Since India had the privilege of leading discussion on paragraph 73, it continued delaying initiative. By September 8 noon, about 50 paragraphs were yet to come on the agenda and the WCAR extended the deadline by a few more hours. Even then India failed to initiate a discussion and thus along with some forty plus items, paragraph 73 lapsed.

This is an abridged version of what happened during the last hours of the WCAR and it is wrong to say that WCAR decided to exclude caste from its agenda as most Indian journalist chose to write with an apparent message that *Dalits* lost their case in Durban.

There is, therefore, no mention of the caste/caste system/*Dalits* in the final declaration of the Conference. Only the UN Press note of 8th September 2001, has the following entry:

“Representatives of the *Dalit* groups also raised the issue of caste based discrimination.”

VIII

What are the gains and what are the losses at the Conference so far as the caste issue is concerned?

The first loss is that India joined the Western Christian nations for the first time in favour of Israel and against Palestinians in the Middle East, so that it could win support of the Western nations in concealing the caste issue prevalent in India. To win active support of China in keeping the caste issue off the agenda of the Conference, India kept silent about the Human Rights violations in China.

Secondly while concealing its own exploitative system of caste, India shut out of discussion even similar problems of many other nations of Asia and Africa because discrimination based on work and descent is not only peculiar to India but is also present in many other countries like Japan and Nigeria and countries of South East Asia. This is a big damage that the Government did to the cause of the WCAR because para 73 of the draft declaration was universal in its application. What a fall for the champion of the fight against Apartheid!

It is not that if para 73 had been discussed at the WCAR and some recommendations made, land would have been automatically distributed to the landless *Dalits* or untouchability would have evaporated into thin air over night or high castes would have totally stopped exploiting *Dalit* men and women etc. Only the existence of the problem of caste-based discrimination would have been acknowledged by India, some promises made, and some UN Agencies come forward to aid and advice the Government. To that extent both India and the *Dalits* are losers.

The first gain for the *Dalits* is that the issue has been internationalized. The UN and the International Human Rights

Commission and NGOs of all major countries of the world and some fair-minded countries of the world are now well aware of the existence of discriminatory caste system in India and the protesting *Dalits* living under it. There has been lot of discussion of this issue in the international press too as mentioned in VI and VII above. The *Dalit* issue died in the eyes of the Government of India but not in the eyes of international public jury. The *Dalits* lost the battle of tactics but won the war at the bar of world public opinion.

The delegates to the Conference and the world at large must be wondering why the Indian Government was so adamantly opposed to the mention of “discrimination based on work and descent”. The fact that the Government of India does not want to be held accountable for taking constructive and effective steps to ameliorate the oppressive condition of *Dalits*, must have become abundantly clear to all governments, non-government organizations and the world at large – therein lies the victory of the Indian *Dalits*. It is no wonder why of all the countries affected by discrimination based on work and descent, India took the leadership to oppose para 73. It had real problem of untouchables and *Dalit* as victims of discriminatory caste system and had many skeletons in its cupboard.

Although the Inter-Government Conference could not give any decision on the matter, the NGO Forum in an unprecedented manner took note of the caste discrimination and deprivation. The NGO Forum could identify the following four major issues that caught the imagination of everyone in Durban and the entire humanity:

- *The Palestinian Struggle.
- *The *Dalit* Struggle.
- *Land Alienation as Racial Discrimination.
- *The Indigenous people's Struggle.

There are two major milestones in the measurement of the *Dalit* activities at WCAR.

Firstly, the WCAR NGO Forum Declaration has clearly stated that caste discrimination is one of the most horrendous forms of racial discrimination and hence all the agencies should

concentrate their efforts to eradicate it. Both the Declaration and the Program of Action explicate this fact. The following is the portion of the document dealing with caste discrimination:-

**CASTE, UNTOUCHABILITY AND DISCRIMINATION
BASED ON WORK AND DESCENT.**

84. Work and descent based discrimination, including caste discrimination and untouchability, is a historically entrenched, false ideological construct sanctioned by religion and culture, which is hereditary in nature and affects over 300 million people in Asia, Pacific and African Regions at the personal, social and structural levels, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

85. The practice of untouchability rooted in the caste system, stigmatizes 260 million *Dalits* in South Asia as “polluted” or “impure”, thereby denying them entry into places of religious worship, participation in religious festivals, assigning them menial and degrading work including cleaning toilets, skinning and disposal of dead animals, digging graves and sweeping, and forced prostitution of *Dalit* women and girls through the traditional system of temple prostitution (*Devadasi*).

86. The system of ‘hidden apartheid’ based on caste practices of distinction, exclusion and restrictions denies *Dalits*’ enjoyment of their economic, social, political, cultural and religious rights, exposing them to all forms of violence and manifests itself in the segregation of housing settlements and cemeteries, segregation in tea-stalls (‘two-cup’ system), denial of access to common drinking water, restaurants, places of worship, restrictions on inter-marriage and other insidious measures all of which inhibit their development as equals.

87. Caste discrimination and untouchability practiced against generations of *Dalits* for centuries together amounts to systematic ‘generational and cultural *Dalticide*’ which is the mass scale destruction of their individual and collective identity, dignity and self respect for generations through cultural methods and practices.

88. Any action or even any sign of an attempt to act by *Dalits* either individually or collectively to assert their rights is met

with extreme measures of violence such as burning or destruction of their home, property and crops, social boycott, rape or gang rape of *Dalit* women and murder by dominant caste individuals or groups, police or the bureaucracy, and that in such instances the State often acts with impunity and in connivance with these perpetrators.

The NGO Forum Program of Action (paragraphs 267 to 277) made a mention of recommendations for the amelioration of the condition of the *Dalits* suffering from caste discrimination, including a suggestion to the UN to ensure the implementation by the States of all relevant recommendations and resolutions of the UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies of the UN Sub-commission on the Promotion of Human Rights, and immediately appoint a UN Special Rapporteur to study the question of work and descent based discrimination, including caste discrimination and untouchability, against these communities in different parts of the world. It also recommended that the governments concerned are made accountable to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for their implementation of policies and programs aimed at eradicating work and descent based discrimination, including caste discrimination and untouchability by constitutionally mandating their governments to submit and openly discuss the annual reports of National Human Rights institutions.

The second achievement of the *Dalit* participation at the WCAR was to see the National Human Rights Commission of India (J. S. Varma's) clear and categorical stand on the inclusion of *Dalit* issue as one of the agenda of the WCAR and the UN Human Rights Commission's (Ms. Robinson) unprecedented support to the *Dalit* struggle. J. S. Varma's stand was contrary to the government's stand to consider the caste discrimination as internal matter of India or engage in the bogus debate whether 'caste is race' or 'caste is not race'. Ms. Mary Robinson took special note of the role played by J. S. Varma and said "I congratulate the principled stand taken by NHRC which stood up to help the *Dalits* and extended moral support..... The NGOs have raised what they called discrimination against *Dalits* in

India and the issue has been brought before the International Community.” “*Dalits*, the most humiliated community of human society, came to this Conference with a great hope, we listened to their pain.....” she said, and called the *Dalits* “serious victims of caste discrimination.”

IX

The press in India had no doubt been silent on this issue as it is controlled by the vested interests of high caste. But there had been two good articles by famous journalists. Article by Praful Bidwai “*Dalits*, Race and Human Rights”, written before the conference started, mentions how the *Dalits* continue to suffer in free India, and why the Government was reactionary in the matter of not allowing discussion of the caste issue at the WCAR: “It is futile to take cover by saying the issue’s origins are primarily domestic. They may be. But that does not negate the case for international attention and intervention,” he said. In an article “*Dalits*, Durban and a Lost Chance” written after the conference was over, Kuldip Nayar deplored that the Government of India had been successful in keeping out caste issue from the final UN resolution at Durban on Racism: “In fact, India had lost at Durban yet another opportunity to explain to the international community the country’s shame----It was at Durban that Mahatma embarked on his agitation against racism and intolerance. It is at Durban that the government of the country for whose freedom he fought, has shut out from discussion caste which was one of the targets of his agitation.”

These two articles are annexed to this Essay as enclosures B and C.

X

Let us not forget what the Government of India’s delegation to the WCAR had to say on the subject matter of the Conference.

Mrs. Meira Kumar, a puppet non-official *Dalit* delegate, was brought by the Government to the Conference to say that there was no caste-based discrimination in India. She is the

daughter of Jagjiwan Ram, a *Dalit*, who was Minister of the Government of India for most of his adult life and who opposed Dr. Ambedkar throughout his life. She said in her intervention, **“....there is no real problem in India on caste system since the laws are in place and there are strong constitutional provisions. It is the creation of the West that there is a problem (of Untouchability and caste system).”**

She refused to circulate the copy of her intervention when approached by the NGOs. The participants at the Conference from all over the world must be wondering at this assertion of a so-called *Dalit* Delegate picked up by the Government as spokesperson of the *Dalit-India*.

Omar Abdullah, the chief of the Indian Delegation, delivered a speech on 2 September 2001, which is enclosed as enclosure D. Our comments on what he said, follow his statement paragraph-wise in brackets.

Omar Abdullah must have shocked the participants when he, in his speech, mentioned “caste” only twice but “race”/ “racial discrimination” about thirty times. He did not utter the word “Untouchability” at all, the scourge of humanity so much prevalent in India. The *Dalits* had effectively publicized the plight of the Untouchables in India and the ineffective measures of the government to do anything for them; the Government Delegation was in the dark about it when it tried to present a rosy picture of India, its social institutions, its rule of law and tolerance. The media and the delegates were left wondering, if the Indian society was indeed so tolerant then why were the *Dalits* excluded from the main stream and the benefits of economic development. While the White Delegates acknowledged the source and the existence of racism and came up with the assurance and promises to evolve corrective mechanism, the Government of India chose, without giving any factual information as to the extent of the problem of the *Dalits*, the measures adopted by the Government and the result thereof, to call the *Dalit* publicity as “propaganda, highly exaggerated and misleading ---- regarding caste based discrimination in India”. Did he forget (or he never cared to know) that the *Dalits*

had backed each of their statements with facts and figures? The Government Delegation let the cat out of the bag when it acknowledged, “We in India have faced this evil squarely. We unequivocally condemn this and indeed any other form of discrimination.” ‘This evil’ refers to ‘caste-based discrimination’, not to caste as the mother of discrimination or to untouchability. Because the Government could not deny the existence of untouchability in India, it chose to keep silent about it. It did not condemn caste as an institution of discrimination and exploitation. All this amounts to intellectual dishonesty on the part of Government of India. The Indian Delegation lost all credibility when Omar Abdullah stated, “We are not here to engage in social engineering within member states...” for similar was the position taken by the White regime of South Africa during apartheid rule. Obviously, what Omar Abdullah said impressed no body as the matter continued to be a subject of the Conference debate days after his speech.

ENCLOSURE ‘A’

Constitution of India recognises Caste in terms of Race and so do UN Agencies:

The Constitutional provisions not only juxtapose caste with race and sex as prohibited grounds of discrimination but also equate caste discrimination with racial discrimination. Article 15 of the Constitution of India that outlaws discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, treats caste at par with race as a prohibited ground of discrimination. Similarly, Article 16 while declaring equality of opportunity in matters of public employment as a fundamental right not only specifies caste as a prohibited ground of discrimination at par with race but also protects and declares the provision for reservation in educational institutions, job opportunities and legislatures (a form of affirmative action). Article 17 while declaring the abolition of untouchability, has in effect accepted the existence of caste-based discrimination and its effect of untouchability as racial discrimination. Article 23 prohibits forced labour as a form of discrimination. Article 25

makes provision for Temple entry. Similarly in Article 29 while declaring the fundamental rights of protection of the interest of minority rights, caste discrimination in admission into educational institutions is prohibited at par with racial discrimination. The provisions relating to reservation of seats for SCs/STs (Castes and Tribes listed in the Schedule appended to the Constitution of India) in the House of People (*Lok Sabha*) and in the Legislative Assemblies of the State (Article 331 and 332) do recognise the mischief of caste discrimination and attempt to remedy the same, which is a clear proof of the Constitution of India acknowledging caste discrimination as a form of racial discrimination. Article 335, mandating about the claims of SCs/STs (Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes) to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union of India and the States, also reflects the acknowledgement of existence of caste discrimination as a form of racial discrimination. Article 338, which provides for National Commission for SCs/STs also reflects the said Constitutional acknowledgement. The provisions of Article 341 providing for the specification of the SCs for the purpose of the Constitution clearly show that the castes are not only equated with races but the scheduled castes include race. It is clear therefore, that according to the Indian Constitution the concept of SCs is inclusive of the concept of race. Thus caste-based discrimination is not only a form of racial discrimination but is more than racial discrimination. Article 341 is extracted here below:

“341. Scheduled Castes – (1) The President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be. (2) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any caste, race or tribe or part of said a notification issued

under the said clause shall be varied by any subsequent notification.”

Thus the Indian Constitution has a priority Constitutional commitment to fight a descent and birth based struggle against caste-ism, race-ism and tribalism.

Several Legislative measures relating to SCs/STs again clearly prove the existence of caste discrimination. The two particular legislations worth pointing out are (a) The Removal of Untouchability Act, 1955 which was improved and renamed subsequently as Protection of Civil Rights Act 1976, prescribing more stringent measures and (b) The SCs/STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. These are based on the recognition that caste-ism is a centuries old vicious ideology founded on hate, violence and exclusion from equality empowerment and resources and it is but fair to rectify its consequences.

The catena of judgments relating to the caste based discrimination against SCs and the remedies against the same shows that that caste is recognised and acknowledged by the judicial decisions as a prohibited ground of discrimination not only at par with race but also as a form of racial discrimination. The different definitions of caste adopted by the several decisions of the Supreme Court of India show that for the purposes of treating caste as a prohibited ground of discrimination, caste is race in the Indian context (*K. C. Vasant Kumar vs. State of Karnataka*, 1985 (Supp.) 1 SCR 352). In the said decision caste is even identified as a race or unit of race, as per the definition of caste accepted by Justice Venkataramaiah in the said case. The 9-Judge Constitution Bench in the case of *Indira Sawhney vs. Union of India* (1992 (Supp.) 3 SCC 217 at 714 defines caste in the following terms: “a caste is nothing but a social class – a socially homogeneous class. It is also an occupational grouping, with this difference that its membership is hereditary. One is born into it. Its membership is involuntary. Even if one ceases to follow that occupation, still he remains and continues a member of that group.”

Thus it is evident from the Constitutional, Legislative and judicial history of India that caste discrimination needs to be

identified and treated as a form of racial discrimination, in fact a more virulent form of racial discrimination than the one found in other countries.

The position of UNO

For many years UN bodies such as International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Convention on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention against Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), CEDAW and International Labour Organization (ILO) had ignored the existence of caste-based discrimination in India. This omission had serious negative repercussions on the ability of the UN to address discrimination against *Dalits*. *Dalits* could make little use of the space offered by human rights bodies to raise the issue of caste-based discrimination. However, the UN human rights bodies have in recent years acknowledged and addressed the existence, prevalence and persistence of caste-based discrimination in India and the rest of South Asia.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its meeting held on August 7 and 8, 1996, considered the question of discrimination against SCs/STs of India and made explicit reference to caste-based discrimination. The Committee held that the “the situation of SCs/STs falls within the scope of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.” The 52nd UN sub—committee in Geneva in August 2000 unanimously passed a resolution to prepare a working paper on ‘Discrimination based on caste.’

Government of India adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 1969. It was not until 1996 the CERD Committee made its first explicit reference to caste discrimination, untouchability and Scheduled Castes. In 1996 State Report to CERD, the Government of India took the position that caste discrimination did not fall under the purview of CERD, because the term ‘descent’ referred exclusively to descent based on race.

However, the CERD made it clear that the term descent mentioned in Article 1 does not refer to race only and recommended a continuing campaign aimed at eliminating the institutionalized thinking of the high caste and low caste mentality. It also recommended that Government of India's next periodic report, which was due on January 4, 1998, be a comprehensive report.

In fact the government of India's report on the CERD clearly shows though caste may not be equivalent to race, it falls within the purview of Article I of the convention due to the clause on descent. Right now, the Indian state is not prepared to equate caste with race for fear that the hidden apartheid - that of Untouchability - would be in the open for all to see. The International Commission on Human Rights in the document titled "Discrimination based on Descent - Discrimination against *Dalits*" in its 56th session stated that: "In Asia, one of the persistent forms of racial discrimination is discrimination based on descent including caste discrimination in South Asia." Earlier in its 49th session held in August - September 1996, as it reviewed India's 10th to 14th periodic reports under CERD, confirmed that the situation of SC and ST (*Dalits*) falls within the scope of the convention.

Thus the Government of India's plea that caste issue is not a case for discussion at the Conference Against Racism on the ground that caste is not same as race is against reality on the ground and also against reason.

ENCLOSURE 'B'

Dalits, Race and Human Rights

By Praful Bidwai

Imagine a collective of people larger in number than the population of Germany, France and Britain put together, who face extreme, entrenched forms of discrimination on account of their biological descent or birth. The discrimination is so severe that it threatens to wipe out their culture, their human identity, and their self-respect - despite its perpetrators' promises to eliminate it. This is the classic situation in history of enslaved,

colonized population, of races declared “inferior”, and of ethnic groups facing virtual genocide.

Now, a multilateral organization comes along and says it could consider discussing the injustice, discrimination and intolerance they suffer. Should the people persuade it to take this on its agenda, or squander that opportunity in the name of an Absolute Principle, which their oppressors invoke, but constantly violate?

With minor differences, this is the dilemma that India’s *Dalits* face. They are the “people” in the analogy above. And the Absolute Principle is none other than national sovereignty, of the conservative kind, disembodied and separated from flesh-and-blood people, the salt of the earth.

The *Dalits* – at least the most committed, intellectually accomplished, dedicated activists among them – have resolved the dilemma by deciding to go to the “multilateral organization”, the United Nations, which is holding the World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia, and Related Forms of Intolerance at Durban, in South Africa (August 31-September 4). Arrayed against the *Dalits* is the Indian State, which is doing its utmost to keep caste out of the WCAR altogether.

To start with, the government’s argument sounds especially jarring in the context of South Africa, the conference venue. This is the country many Indians associate with the politicization of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Indian Nation. South Africa galvanized one of the world’s most inspiring collective struggles against a historic evil – that congealed, institutionalized, forms of racism called apartheid.

And one of the strongest State-level supporters of that struggle was the Indian government, which related the fight against racism to universal human rights, no less. And yet, the same government not quite; the BJP is in power now– today advances pedantic, frivolous or hairsplitting distinctions between race and caste to claim that caste-ism does not fit into the WCAR agenda; we have outlawed it, you see, and we will tackle what it left of it within our borders, thank you...

In reality, caste-ism is alive and well in India and in numerous other countries too – from Japan (the Burakumin untouchables) to Nigeria and Nepal, and from Pakistan to South Korea and Sri Lanka, not to speak of the many other lands that are home to our own Diasporas.

Most crucially, and centrally, caste-ism is concentrated in the system of exclusion, discrimination and oppression directed at the *Dalits*, who comprise (including Christians and Muslims) about 260 million people. Without understanding the *Dalit* question, it is impossible to comprehend the pathology of the social and economic servitude on which the present Indian order is based – leave alone to reform and transform that order into something minimally decent.

One only has to scan the daily newspapers to note the abiding reality of atrocities against *Dalits* in India. Every day, they are abused, insulted, bullied, beaten up, maimed, forced to perform unpaid labour – or massacred when they resist in an organized way.

Every hour, two *Dalits* are assaulted; every day, three *Dalit* women are raped and two *Dalits* are killed, there are 30,000 registered cases of anti-*Dalit* abuse and violent annually. (And these are only the reported cases, probably a fraction of the total). The annual reports of the National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Tribes show how pervasive are the systematic oppression of *Dalits*. Half a century or more after untouchability was officially abolished, it thrives in different States in countless forms: Barring of access to village wells, prohibition of entry into temples and village chaupals, serving of tea in separate containers, en bloc prevention from exercising the right to vote. This quasi-apartheid extends from home to school, field to temple, from the street to the courts – from cradle to grave. Under-pinning the oppression is inequality and deprivation: In land ownership, literacy, access to sanitation, drinking water, or to non-menial jobs. Thus, a *Dalit* is 50 to 70 per cent likelier to be landless or living below the poverty line than other Indians, and twice as likely to drop out of school.

Forty per cent of *Dalits* are bonded labourers. Under two-decades-long elitist neo-liberal economic policies, the Dalits' lot has almost certainly worsened, with privatization of common property resources, faster environmental degradation, greater rural unemployment, and rising food prices. Discrimination against *Dalits* runs in the deepest veins of society – and reaches all the way up to the top, barring token exceptions.

It is sanctioned by custom, tradition, ritual, and hierarchical ideologies, which see severe iniquities as “natural”. Above all, it is legitimized by religion or its karmic and fatalistic interpretations. This embedded, multi-faced character makes *Dalit* oppression uniquely malign and loathsome.

To redress this horrific situation, Indian society has only taken limited measures such as reservations, the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1995, or bans on manual scavenging and carrying of night soil on the head. As numerous official reports show, these have produced partial, limited, and uneven results. *Dalit* quotas in Category A and B government jobs remain chronically unfilled.

Dalits continue to be massively excluded from the liberal professions, the judiciary and the armed forces – which refuse reservations. The UGC has now decided to exclude them from quotas for post-graduate research and teaching too.

A particularly grave failure of policy is reflected in the plight of *Dalit* women, who bear the “double burden” of exploitation. Today's caste oppression is not some medieval hangover. It is integral to capitalism, which relies heavily on bondage and violence to secure absolute control over labour. This includes non-payment of dues, sexual abuse of women, physical intimidation, and increasingly, outright murder.

The emerging pattern is one in which *Dalits* are not helpless, passive victims, but where their growing awareness and

resistance is suppressed by the use of force. Yet, *Dalit* self-assertion is real and growing.

The campaign to get caste included in the Durban agenda is one of its manifestations. By resisting it, the government is only showing its paranoia and its growing unilateralism in international diplomacy. Its argument that caste is not exactly race is trivially correct, but irrelevant.

The WCAR agenda, itself derived from the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, focuses not on race, but on the key noun, “intolerance”, especially intolerance based on “descent” – a term originally included at India’s own instance in the CERD process. Evidently, the government fears the inclusion of caste because it has a lot to hide.

This fear is reflected in New Delhi’s increasing unilateralism too – a steep degeneration from its earlier advocacy of multilateralism. Thus, India has become a major spoiler of or obstacle to good, equal, treaties: The International Criminal Court, Landmines Ban, Fissile Materials Cut off, the (tripartite, broad-based, mild) World Commission on Dams report and numerous human rights conventions which it refuses to sign and/or ratify.

For instance, it has refused to ratify the Convention on Torture, the Convention on Status of Refugees and important protocols to the Covenant on Civil Rights and Political Rights – in addition to several ILO conventions. In defending absurd notions of “sovereignty”, India often invites harm and ridicule – e.g., demanding exceptions to the Basel Convention against Hazardous Wastes, so it can import them and poison its own people! In the present instance, India’s major fear is international reprimand for *Dalit* oppression – as an instance of human rights violation. But this is indeed the reality. *Dalit* rights are human rights.

And as the government has itself repeatedly admitted, after signing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights half-a-century ago, human rights come before national boundaries; they are universal. Sovereignty cannot be a ground for breaching them. They are, a global concern – just as the Holocaust was

despite Germany's sovereignty, or the Kosovo issue despite Milosevic.

India can only gain by being transparent and honest on caste-ism, and admitting that there is a big *Dalit* problem. This would be necessary first step before doing something about it, and being answerable to the international community on it.

It is futile to take cover by saying the issue's origins are primarily domestic. They may be. But that does not negate the case for international attention and intervention. The two go hand in hand.

Put simply, the struggle against apartheid could never have been won quickly and decisively without the global Anti-Apartheid Movement and the sanctions imposed on the Pretoria regime. But nor could it have been won without string domestic mass mobilization.

The *Dalits* have shown remarkable restraint and patience in fighting centuries-old oppression. The government must reciprocate and listen to them.

If it refuses, it will only discredit itself. Worse, it will produce avoidable disaffection within this sensitive community, without whose participation Indian democracy will itself lack legitimacy, health and resilience.

ENCLOSURE 'C'**Dalits
Durban
and
a Lost Chance.
By Kuldip Nayar**

The news is that New Delhi has been successful in keeping out caste by descent from the final U.N. resolution at Durban on racism. I do not think it is a matter for celebrations, which the unthinking Ministry of External Affairs is doing.

The Government's stand on caste is political. Otherwise, it is not understandable why it should have been a party to block the discussion on Zionism at Durban. People in India support Jews but not the thesis that Israel can go on expanding its frontiers.

What has New Delhi proved? Does it mean that India knows of no discrimination by birth, or does it mean that the non-recognition of such ills will make them disappear? True, caste is not racism. But the difference is technical. How does it matter when the end product of caste and racism is the same, discrimination and degradation? Even the National Human Rights Commission, otherwise tilting towards the Government, has said that the nomenclature is of little importance when casteism and racism do not treat men and women as human beings.

The series of legislative steps against the *Dalits* are impressive on paper. But the reality is that they continue to live in separate habitations, draw water from separate wells and get the worst chastisement if they ever dare to raise their head. They are hanged if they marry out of caste. They are murdered if they dare to be equal to the upper caste. Official figures show that one *Dalit* woman is raped every six hours and one *Dalit* killed every three days.

Wounded People

No democratic system should be ashamed of discussing at any forum its practices, which disable its own people. A free society owes its existence to the tenets of freedom. The *Dalits* have never had a breath of freedom in the suffocating Hindu society. They are wounded people, battered and broken. India is strong enough democratically to admit that it has failed somewhere, despite all the guarantees in the Constitution, to provide the same glow of freedom, which the upper castes enjoy.

In fact, India has lost at Durban yet another opportunity to explain to the international community the country's shame. The Government could have admitted before the world that despite its legal efforts it had failed to remove untouchability and that it wanted the international community to discuss the case and suggest remedies. It would have been New Delhi's moral success.

It was at Durban that Mahatma Gandhi embarked on his agitation against racism and intolerance. It is at Durban that the Government of the country for whose freedom he fought has shut out from discussion caste, which was one of the targets of his agitation. New Delhi, happy over its victory, feels elated that even the U.N. Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, refused to include caste on the agenda when NGOs from India accosted him. But it is Pyrrhic victory. The world expects something better from the land of the Mahatma.

The blame is not that of the upper caste alone. The politics of votes has become ingrained in the *Dalits*. Their leaders, belonging mostly to the creamy layer, have come to enjoy the spoils of office, without articulating the cause of the lowest in real terms.

While piloting the Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the tallest among the *Dalits*, was able to incorporate in it the numerous safeguards for the untouchables. Untouchability is also banned. But this has made Hindu society no better in its treatment towards untouchable. The upper caste has not changed, neither in its attitude of hide-bound superiority, nor in its refusal

to admit the *Dalits* in the social structure. Caste is denounced but not the cast system.

But what annoys me is the patience and stamina of the *Dalits* who have stayed part of the Hindu society in spite of the cruelties they have undergone for untold years. Dr. Ambedkar aptly described the situation by borrowing a phrase from Shakespeare: "It may be your interest to be our masters but how can it be ours, to be your slaves?"

ENCLOSURE 'D'

Statement by Omar Abdullah, Minister of State for External Affairs (India) at WCAR.

(Our comments are in brackets.)

Madam President,

On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I felicitate you on your election as Chairman of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. We are grateful to the Government and the people of South Africa for their warm hospitality and for the excellent arrangements for the Conference. *(No comments.)*

Madam President,

It is fitting that the World Conference is taking place in your great country. The solidarity of the international community with South Africa struggle against apartheid symbolizes mankind's united quest for equality, dignity and justice. We take this opportunity to salute the valiant peoples of Africa. They braved repression, brutality and indignity and remained in the vanguard of the war against racism and racial discrimination. They have set a glorious example. *(No comments called for except that the Dalits are also braving repression, brutality, indignity, and theirs' is also 'mankind's united quest for equality, dignity and justice and should have been referred to in the speech).*

Madam President,

I would like to record our deep appreciation for the inspiring Inaugural address by President Mbeki. We hope the Conference would be guided by the forward-looking vision he outlined. The thought provoking statements of Secretary General Kofi Annan and High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson, should assist us in our work (*No comments.*)

Madam President,

The international community takes legitimate pride in its historic triumph against apartheid, the most inhuman and abhorrent manifestation of racism. We must show courage and sagacity also in facing up to the heinous consequences of the racist practices of the colonial era. Slavery and slave trade caused untold misery to countless numbers, as did imperialism and colonialism. In saying so, we do not mire this Conference in the past. Of course, this World Conference must be focused, constructive and forward-looking. We do not wish that we confine ourselves to recriminations for historic wrongs. To do so will neither be purposeful, nor action-oriented, in combating modern manifestations of racism that cry out for urgent action. But, we must study the past to learn lessons for the future. The demise of imperialism and colonialism have not led to the elimination of attitudes, habits and thought processes ingrained in entire populations over generations. We are united in our belief that our global civilization is enriched by diversity. Yet, we witness exclusive-ism based on racial hatred; violence as an instrumentality for achieving racial cleansing. Sadly, theories of racial superiority continue to be propagated and practiced even though recent biological research has conclusively controverted such beliefs. We continue to witness instances of destruction of constitutional order to promote policies based on racial or ethnic discrimination. If we are to move towards a better future, we must rededicate ourselves to our fight against racism and racial discrimination (*Our comments: The people of India should also show 'courage and sagacity' in facing up to the harmful consequences of the caste practices of the past four thousand*

years and should 'rededicate' themselves to fight against caste discrimination and for 'elimination of attitudes, habits and thought processes ingrained in entire population over generations in India, which it denied at the conference).

Madam President,

Economic disparities sustain and strengthen racist attitudes, as do political platforms and concepts based on racial hatred and discrimination that regard foreigners as rivals, competitors and a threat to local prosperity, culture and identity. so also immigration, citizenship and refugee laws with racist overtones. We must remain vigilant also against the vulnerability of modern communication technology. The internet has turned the world into a global village. Yet, this technological beneficence is being used by some to spread racial hatred.

(Our comments: 'Economic disparities' between Dalits and high castes in India also strengthens caste-ist attitude on the part of the high castes and should be reduced to the minimum. What has the Government of India done for this? India is one of the most corrupt countries in the world and this corruption helps in exploitation of the Dalits most of all by the entrenched higher castes. Concepts based on cast-ist hatred and discrimination are no less dangerous than racism. More effective than electronic media is the channel of religion and more virulent when it supports inequitable and unjust system of social and economic relations as is done by Hinduism through caste system. Before talking about global village, let us look at the Indian village, which itself is divided against on caste lines.

Madam President,

It is here in South Africa, indeed in this very city of Durban, that Mahatma Gandhi launched the Satyagraha movement – struggle based on truth – against the racist regime in South Africa. In 1946, India was the first country to raise its voice against apartheid at the United Nations. We have always regarded racism and racial discrimination as the anti-thesis of everything humanity stands for – equality, justice, peace and progress. It is a negation of the Charter of the United Nations

and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. *(No comments except that caste discrimination also attracts the provisions of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which fact the Government of India suppressed).*

Madam President,

In our own national context, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and guided by the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar and other social reformers, the government is committing to combating and eliminating discrimination in all its manifestation. Over half century ago, we built into our Constitution, human rights and fundamental freedoms as justifiable principles. It proscribes discrimination on any ground, including race. Appropriate laws supplement this constitutional provision. The Indian penal code prohibits dissemination of ideas that promote disharmony on any ground including race. The Constitution pioneered affirmative action programmes for the socially disadvantaged. We have put in place an administrative and institutional framework to tackle, within our democratic framework, different forms of discrimination. Our independent judiciary, an ever-vigilant media and an active civil society have strengthened the government's efforts for attaining equality and non-discrimination. Our nationhood is based on values of democracy and rule of law, pluralism, tolerance and diversity. We stand resolved to counter the forces that seek to destroy these values. *(Our comments: The Constitutional provisions and affirmative action legislation of the Government of India has only paper value. These are not implemented properly by government machinery. In the villages it is the Manusmriti, which is operative and not the government laws. Iniquitous Caste system is the basic framework of social relations in India. Unless castes are outlawed, there is no question of equality or non-discrimination. Government of India has no proposal to ban castes/caste system. The Indian society is as caste-ridden as it was before the new Constitution of India came into force. The bureaucracy, the executive and the judiciary are dominated by*

the exploiting high castes. The media is hundred percent controlled by the high castes and do not report about what atrocities are being committed on the Dalits in the villages and what happens to them in the ghettos of the cities.)

Madam President,

At the same time, we are humbled by our awareness that much remains to be done. Action at the level of the Government, however important it may be, is not enough unless there is a change in social attitudes and values. Change in social attitudes cannot be achieved simply by legislating. Our society has a tradition and capacity for dialogue and building consensus. But as all democratic societies know only too well, such change can only be brought about through education and persuasion. This cannot be achieved overnight. (***Our comments:** It is true that change cannot be brought about overnight, but the rate of progress is too slow and the attitudes of the high castes are anti-Dalit. Nothing is being done vigorously to bring about the 'change in the social attitudes and values'. The high castes still have the laws of Manusmriti as their ideals and the old traditions are still anti-Dalit. Nothing is being done by the Government of India to root out the anti-Dalit attitude of the higher castes who monopolize all the good things of life at the cost of Dalits.*)

Madam President,

To ensure that our participation in this Conference is meaningful, constructive and in consonance with our national policies, Prime Minister Vajpayee constituted a National Committee under the chairmanship of External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh. The committee deliberated on the issues relating to this Conference, and, in order to ensure proper preparations through a nationwide discussion, heard presentations by NGOs, academics, professionals, representatives of the civil society and others interested in assisting the Committee. The Committee was heartened by the wide spread approbation of the constitutional and legislative provisions against any forms of discrimination

and of affirmative action programmes. It noted also the call for more concerted efforts at re-orienting ingrained social attitudes. The Committee recommended that there was need to strengthen the national structures and institutions to ensure effective implementation of the Constitutional and Legislative provisions, affirmative action programmes and transform social attitudes within our society. I affirm the commitment of my government to act on this recommendation. (***Our comments:** The committee was not representative of the Dalits nor did they listen the real Dalit leaders. It had only 'closed' meetings. No person in India will openly say that he believes in caste or discrimination and yet carry on caste discrimination when it comes to practice. Every body knows what needs to be done but the will to do is lacking. There is no move in any quarter to outlaw caste system and so long as caste system continues, it is useless to talk of equality of all citizens of India. Caste system is the mother of Untouchability and other discriminatory attitudes. Unless law bans caste system, it is idle to talk of transformation of social attitudes. There is no proposal with the Government to strengthen the Dalits economically and most of the ills of the Dalits arise from economic deprivations ingrained in caste system.*)

Madam President,

In the run up to the World Conference, there has been propaganda, highly exaggerated and misleading, often based on anecdotal evidence, regarding caste-based discrimination in India. We in India have faced this evil squarely. We unequivocally condemn this and, indeed, any other form of discrimination. The issue has remained at the top of our national agenda. I have just spoken of our Constitutional, legislative and administrative framework; of our affirmative action programmes for the uplift of the members of the historically disadvantaged castes. We are proud of the positive difference these measures have made. The institutions of our democratic polity, the progressive removal of poverty and the spread of literacy have

empowered and given a choice to millions of the weaker sections of our society. We are determined to continue this national endeavour. *(Our comments: It has been difficult for the government representative to ignore the existence of castes in India. What about untouchability, caste suppression and caste exploitation so much publicized by the Dalit NGOs which the minister calls 'propaganda'. The Dalits delegates produced facts and figures and true stories about the miserable plight of the Dalits in India. What statistics did the government produced to show the 'positive difference these measures have made' over the past five decades? Unless the government faces ground realities, they cannot improve the situation. It is here that the Government of India is dishonest and the Dalits want International Agencies to oversee as to what is happening to the Untouchables in India.)*

Madam President,

We are firmly of the view that the issue of caste is not an appropriate subject for discussion at this Conference. We are here to ensure that there is no state-sponsored, institutionalized, discrimination against any individual citizen or groups of citizens. We are here to ensure that states do not condone or encourage regressive social attitudes. We are not here to engage in social engineering within member states. It is neither legitimate nor feasible nor practical for this World Conference or, for that matter, even the UN to legislate, let alone police, individual behaviour in our societies. The battle has to be fought within our respective societies to change thoughts, processes and attitudes; indeed, the hearts and souls of our peoples. This is the task that we pledge ourselves to remain engaged in. *(Our comments: The arguments used here by the minister are the same as used by the White regime against outside efforts for demolition of apartheid in South Africa. Inequality and discrimination are very much "institutionalized" in caste system that has social, cultural and economic consequences. Unless caste system is abolished under the Constitution and caste based discrimination is outlawed in all its forms, there is no question of equality of all the citizens of India. In the streets of Indian*

villages the laws of Manusmriti are more operative than the government laws. If racism could be discussed at the Conference why not caste-ism which is of the same genre as racism? There has to be intensive social engineering in India. In the age of globalization, efforts at social engineering have also to be globalized. If India could condemn racism in South Africa perpetrated by the Whites, why cannot the world condemn caste system perpetrated by the high castes against the Dalits? The Government of India does not want outside world to know the real position of the Dalits and to do anything for the abolition of caste and caste system, which is part and parcel of Hinduism. The Dalits have waited long and feel that the government is not doing enough to ameliorate their condition under any time bound program. They want the UN and International Human Rights Commission to monitor the situation and to publicize the weaknesses of the system so that others could make suggestions or otherwise help to accelerate the process of change. The arguments used here by the Minister are the same as used by the White regime against outside efforts for demolition of apartheid of South Africa).

Madam President,

The World Conference should call for effective recourse and remedies for victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, based on the principles enunciated in the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racism. Promulgation of stringent national laws, against these phenomena, as necessary; their strict implementation; and the setting up of independent national institutions with powers to address problems connected with endemic racism; are some essential steps in the combat against racism. The Conference should also encourage countries to introduce affirmative action in respect of disadvantaged segments of their populations. Special attention needs to be paid to secure, for women and children, who are victims of such discrimination, their basic human rights and dignity. The power of education must be harnessed to instill the right values in

young minds. (***Our comments:*** *The same suggestions as Omar Abdullah made for eradication of racism and racial discrimination are applicable for the eradication of caste system in India. Caste is as dangerous to humanity as racial discrimination. India had been refusing to co-operate with CERD as if that Convention is not applicable to India. Where are the 'effective recourse and remedies' or the 'strict implementation' of laws against untouchability or against atrocities against Dalits in the villages? If the Government is sincere and its policies are correctly framed, caste-ism can be killed in two or three generations.*)

Madam President:

The UN agencies concerned should be provided with requisite resources to take, within their respective mandates, all possible action to combat racism and racial discrimination. The Inter Parliamentary Union can play a particularly important role encouraging reflection in national Parliaments. The Conference should encourage the mass media to promote ideas of tolerance and understanding. (***Our comments:*** *Caste-ism is racism plus. So the UN Agencies concerned should also be enabled by the Government of India to study consequences of caste-ism and to help removing caste-based discrimination.*)

Madam President,

As one of the oldest civilization of the world, India is fully conscious of its responsibility. We will work closely and tirelessly with your delegation and with all other delegations to ensure that the lofty ideals before this World Conference lead us to seek constructive, productive and lasting solutions to our common concern. (***Our comments:*** *This 'oldest civilization' has been most iniquitous and exploitative. By not allowing the caste to be discussed, India torpedoed the lofty ideals of the Conference. In a previous paragraph, the minister said, "We are not here to engage in social engineering within member states. It is neither legitimate nor feasible nor practical for this World Conference or, for that matter, even for the UN to legislate let alone police individual behaviour in our society-----". This shows what kind of double-dealings the Government of India has*

indulged in during the proceedings of the Conference and how it has been hoodwinking the Dalits since 1947.)

As stated earlier the greatest intellectual dishonesty shown by the Government of India was its silence about the existence of Untouchability in India and its reference to ‘caste-based discrimination’ rather than caste system as the mother of discrimination and untouchability. The Government behaved like a patient who does not accept the illness he suffers from. How can then the Government be honest and effective in rooting out the twin evils of caste and untouchability?

If para 73 of the draft declaration had come up for discussion, many delegates from the West would have highlighted the institution of untouchability still prevalent in India and so much damaging to the *Dalits*, and Government of India would have been forced to account for it in future by the UN Agencies.

‘TENTACLES OF CASTE SYSTEM’
on page next to poem by Dr. Sharma.



In a village in Gujarat.

THREE WISE MEN

(Dr. Hari Sharma)

We are not men.
 We are only boys.
 Are we wise?
 No.
 We cannot read.
 We cannot write.
 We do not go to school.
 We never have.
 Going to school costs money,
 Fees, clothes, books, pencils, slates.
 All this costs money.
 And going to school costs time.
 Do we have the time?
 Who will look after the cattle?
 Or, the little brothers and sisters?
 The many chores around the fields?
 Cutting fodder?
 Fetching water?
 But none of this has to be
 done today.

A big wise man has come from the city.
 With a camera.
 And all the big wise men are gathered
 under the big banyan tree.
 The school teacher.
 The medicine man.
 The postman.
 The big Patel.
 All the big wise men of the village
 are there.
 The big, *unwise* men, too.
 Like our fathers.
 Wish we could be close and listen.
 They are talking about land.
 The problem of land.
 But, no, we cannot be close.
 'Cause we are only boys.
 And we are not wise.
 But when big wise men
 (and also big *unwise* men)
 talk about land
 we know it is important.
 We try to listen,
 as much as we can.

TENTACLES OF CASTE SYSTEM

by
(Khushi Ram)

“Caste system has made the Brahmins intellectually dishonest, the Kshatriyas haughty and cruel, the Vaishyas greedy for money, and has dehumanized the Shudras.”

(Dr. Ambedkar)

Dr. Ambedkar wrote his presidential address for the *sine die* adjourned conference of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* of Lahore (now in Pakistan). He knew that his audience was well aware of the caste system and what its ramifications were for the various castes of the Hindu society. He therefore did not much elaborate the basis of caste system or its structure. His main aim was to tell the Hindus what caste system has done to their society, especially the *Shudras* and the outcastes, and how it can be destroyed through reform of Hindu religion. It is therefore necessary to know something more about caste system and why Dr. Ambedkar was so much critical of it.

Division of labour is found in all the societies of the world, its basis being inequality of men in intelligence, talent and culture, difference in needs of the people living in a civilized society and in their physical circumstances. It was present in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece and even in the Indus Valley civilization because a complex city-based society cannot exist or be formed without some sort of division of labour. Manu who is ordinarily but erroneously considered to be the founder of Caste System in India (if there was such a historical person) lived no more than two thousand years back. And *Manusmriti* was written much after the castes (Not caste system) had evolved as a historical process and when the society, under the influence of Buddha's teachings, was rather developing 'anti-caste' tendency, threatening the privileges of dominant communities. The priestly class, the ruling class, the professional or agriculture based communities, the menial class and the outcastes had already emerged with their characteristic style of life, with their

privileges or deprivations from region to region with different nomenclatures. Originally castes could represent tribes belonging to different races/groups as they entered India from outside, separated mainly by different spoken languages, traditions, customs and professions etc. and later because of geographical and situational factors as they settled down in different parts of the country. Functional/occupational groups also consolidated themselves into castes with passage of time. It only required brilliant mind from amongst the educated community to analyze the situation and give it a systematic form in writing which in due course came to have an all-India format and Manu appeared on the scene. (No body could divide men by force overnight and set up a system of the type of caste formations of Manu's description, which were unequal in status and income etc.) He gave it a formal religious shape by grouping various interest groups into four main castes, viz. *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras*, leaving vast majority outside the caste system, who were called *Anaryas* /*Avarnas* / *Dasyus* / *Das* / *Chandalas*/*Antajyas*/*Panchamas*. While the first three castes were *Aryans*, the *Shudras* and the outcastes were the aborigines whom the *Aryans* subjugated, the *Shudras* being 'broken' people and the outcastes being Buddhist rebels as proved by Dr. Ambedkar in his writings. The outcastes have also been called *Ati-shudras* (utmost shudras), *Untouchables*, *Depressed classes*, *Harijans* and *Scheduled Castes* from time to time. Nowadays these people call themselves *Dalits* which means 'Crushed People'. It is about these people that Dr. Ambedkar speaks in his book 'Annihilation of Caste', and these are the people who raised their voice at the 'World Conference Against Race-ism in 2001 (see Annex IV). The position of the *Shudras* in the Hindu scheme of things is deplorable but worse is the position of the outcastes.

However, Manu converted the natural system of division of labour into an unnatural one by imposing arbitrary rules against social mobility, especially the rule of caste being fixed permanently by birth, by sharp stratification based on too many privileges and rights for the higher castes and too many

handicaps for lower castes and by banning upward social mobility altogether. Because the whole scheme was so unnatural, they sold this morbid philosophy in the name of God. The *pursha Sukta* of the Rig Veda and other similar entries in the other three *Vedas* are later interpolations, when the caste system had been more or less established. That was just to convert the unholy polity into a holy one in the name of God. The theories of transmigration of soul and of *Karma* were invented to justify the graded inequality of castes, to justify the privileges of *Brahmins/Kshatriyas* and to pacify the *Shudras* into acceptance of their deprivations as their destiny.

The idea in explaining caste system as historical process rather than a product of *Manusmriti* alone is that much more is required to be done for abolishing Caste System than mere banning untouchability or discrimination based on caste. It has come to us as a product of history spread over thousands of years, it will take lots of efforts to loosen its grip over the Indian mind, and such efforts may have to continue for generations, if not centuries, unless drastic steps are taken to kill castes.

It may be mentioned that there have been attempts in the past in other parts of the world also for writing about ideal organization of the society. We have the examples of Plato's Republic and Sir Thomas Moore's Utopia. However, the Greek and the English knew that society cannot be contained in such straitjackets and never tried to implement the contents of those books. However, the Hindus applied the laws of *Manusmriti* and with actual experience of the system went on amending these laws in favour of the higher castes, but against the interest of the lower castes. There is no book of the Hindus criticizing the caste system as put in *Manusmriti*. If any authority wrote about caste system (like Prashar, Narda, Gautama, Apastamba and Yajñavalkya etc.), he tried to introduce more rigorous laws to the detriment of the *Shudras* and *Vaishiyas*. Manu's *Manusmriti* is by far the most famous book on caste system. The following are some of the laws relating to the Brahmins, *Kshatriyas* and *Shudras* prescribed in that book:

- 1.) God, at the time of creation of the Universe, fixed the profession of each individual and each individual began to perform that very function in his various reincarnations i.e. rebirths, without any change in profession. (Manu 1/28).
- 2.) For the welfare of the people, God himself created Brahmins from his mouth, *Kshatriyas* from his arms, *Vaishiyas* from his thighs and the *Shudras* from his feet. (Manu 1/31).
- 3.) That glorious God, for the protection of this world, created from his mouth, arms, thighs and feet various castes and fixed various professions for each of the caste. (Manu 1/87).
- 4.) To study, to teach, to preside over *Yajnas*, to give in charity (only to other *Brahmins*) and to receive in charity (from all castes) – these are the functions of the *Brahmins*. (Manu 1/88).
- 5.) To protect (i.e. to rule over) people, to give in charity, to hold *Yajnas*, to read *Vedas* – these are the functions of the *Kshatriyas*. (Manu 1/89).
- 6.) To rear cattle, to give in charity, to hold *Yajnanas*, to study and to do business and agriculture and to lend money – these are the functions of the *Vaishiyas*. (Manu 1/90).
- 7.) God ordered the *Shudras* to do only one thing and that was to do service to all the three above castes. (Manu 1/91).
- 8.) While giving names at the time of the birth, the name of the Brahmin should be indicative of some thing auspicious, the name of the *Kshatriya* indicative of power, the name of the *Vaishiya* indicative of wealth and the name of the *Shudra* should be indicative of something indicative of hate. (Manu 2/31).
- 9.) The second part of the name of a Brahmin should be ‘*Sharma*’, of the *Kshatriya* it should be ‘*Varma*’...and the name of *Shudra* should end with the word ‘*Das*’ i.e., Slave.
- 10.) If a *Shudra* dies, his corpse should be taken out through the south of the village, in case of a *Vaishiya* through the west of the village, a *Kshatriya*’s corpse through the north of the village and a Brahmin through the east of the village. (Manu 5/92).
- 11.) At the time of taking evidence in a court, the Brahmin should be told, ‘say’ (what you want to say), a *Kshatriya* told ‘tell the truth’, a *Vaishiya* should be told to ‘tell the truth in the

name of cow, crop and wealth', and a *Shudra* should be told to 'say on oath of all the sins committed by him'. (Manu 8/88).

12.) The rates of interest to be charged from the four castes are as under:

*From the *Brahmins* 2% per month. *From the *Kshatriyas* 3% per month. *From the *Vaishiyas* 4% per month. *From the *Shudras* 5% per month. (Manu 8/42).

13.) If a *Kshatriya* abuses a Brahmin by word of mouth, a fine of 100 coins should be imposed on the former. In the case of *Vaishya* the fine is 200 coins and if a *Shudra* commits the same offence he should be put to death. (Manu 8/267).

14.) If a Brahmin uses abusive words for the *Kshatriya*, a fine of 50 coins should be imposed on him. If he abuses a *Vaishya* the fine is 25 coins. If he abuses a *Shudra* the Brahmin should pay a fine of only 12 coins. (Manu 8/268).

15.) No sin on this earth is greater than killing of a *Brahmin* (whatever his crime). Therefore, the king should not even think of killing a Brahmin. (Manu 8/381).

16.) If some one in a lower caste takes up the occupation of a higher caste, king should take away his wealth, make him a prisoner and turn him out of the country. (Manu 10/96).

17.) The service of a Brahmin is the best duty of the *Shudra*. Whatever else he (*Shudra*) does, is useless. (10/131).

18.) A *Shudra* should not retain wealth even if he is capable of doing so. For if he becomes rich, he will only cause suffering to the Brahmins. So the Brahmin should seize the *Shudra's* wealth without fear or any hesitation. *Shudras's* wealth does not belong to the *Shudra*. (Manu 10/129).

19.) Because God created the Brahmin first of all and from His mouth and because he possesses the *Vedas*, the *Brahmin* is by right the Lord of the whole creation. (Manu 1/93).

20.) Of all the things created in this world, those with life are the best, of all the living things those using their intelligence are the best; and of those having intelligence man is the best, and of all men, Brahmin is the best. (Manu 1/96).

21. From his very birth the Brahmin takes the best of the ranks. He is the master of all the living things. His very existence is as a guardian of religion. (Manu 1/99).
22. Whatever exists in this world belongs to the Brahmin because Brahmin is the best of the creation and therefore he alone is entitled to it. (Manu 1/100).
23. Even if a Brahmin boy is only 10 years old and a *Kshatriya* is hundred years old, the Brahmin boy should be respected by the *Kashatriya* as his own father. (Manu 2/135).
24. If somebody hits a Brahmin even with a straw, he will be born sinful 21 times on account of that sin. (Manu 4/166).
- 25.) When a *Brahmin* finds a treasure, he may take the whole of it, for he is the Lord of everything. (Manu 8/37).
- 26.) If a treasure is found buried in the earth by some one , the king should give half of that treasure to the Brahmin and keep the other half in his treasury. (Manu 8/38).
- 27.) A Brahmin may commit any number of crimes/sins, the king should not put him to death. The king should only banish him from his kingdom allowing him to take away all his wealth with him. (Manu 8/380).
- 28.) A Brahmin is the god of gods from his very birth. This is so because of the teachings of the *Vedas*. (Manu 11/84).
- 29.) Even if a slave (*Shudra*) has been liberated by his master, he cannot become liberated. A *Brahmin* should take him as a slave because *Shudra* is a born slave. (Manu 8/413).
- 30.) If anybody tries to educate a *Shudra* in the matter of religion or teaches him how to observe religious rites, he will go to the worst of hells along with that *Shudra*. (Manu 1/84).
- 31.) A *Brahmin* may be a Brahmin for name sake only, for the king he is teacher of religion. But a *Shudra* cannot attain that position even after three *Yugas*. (Manu 8/20).
- 32.) If a *Shudra* calls a *Brahmin* a sinner etc. he should be punished by pulling out his tongue because a Brahmin is born from the mouth of the *Brahma*. (Manu 8/270).
- 33.) If a *Shudra* tries to teach religion to the Brahmin, the king should put boiling oil into his mouth and ears. (Manu 8/272).

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- 34.) If a *Shudra* beats a higher caste man with his hand or feet etc., that very part of the body should be cut off. (Manu 8/271).
- 35.) If a *Shudra* tries to sit on the same level as that of a higher caste man, the king should break his back, cut out his buttocks and turn him out of his kingdom. (Manu 8/281).
- 36.) A *Shudra* should be given only left over crumbs to eat, old worn out clothes to wear, rotten grain and old worn out bed sheets for his use. (Manu 10/925).
- 37.) One should feel repentance for killing a *Shudra* only to the extent one feels for killing a cat, mongoose, a bird, a frog, a dog, a lizard, an owl or a crow. (Manu 11/131).
- 38.) God took the essence of Indra, Vayu, Surya, and Agni etc. gods to create the king. (Manu 7/4).
- 39.) God has created the rulers of the kingdom to protect those institutions and those people who remain within their caste and perform the duties of their caste. (Manu 7/35).
- 40.) A king in whose kingdom a Brahmin starves, his kingdom will be destroyed by various epidemics and rebellions. (Manu 7/134).
- 42.) King should force the *Vaishiyas* and *Shudras* to perform the functions fixed for them. If these two castes are negligent in performing their duties or refuse to carryout their functions, they will cause suffering to the whole world. (Manu 8/418).
- 43.) The *Kshatriyas* cannot prosper without Brahmins nor Brahmins can prosper without *Kshatriyas*. If they are united they will prosper in this as well the next world. (Manu 9/322).
- 44.) If a *Shudra* intentionally listens for committing to memory the *Vedas* (source of all knowledge in ancient times), his ears should be filled with molten lead and lac; if he utters the *Veda*, his tongue should be cut off, and if he has mastered the *Vedas* his body should be cut to pieces. (Manu 12/4).
- 45.) Even a foolish Brahmin should not be shown any disrespect. (Manu 9/317).
- 46.) Brahmins and *Kshatriyas* are not allowed to marry a *Shudra* girl even if they are unable to find a suitable match from amongst their own caste. (Manu 3/14).

47.) Marriages across caste lines are strictly prohibited. Off springs of mixed marriages are to be treated as outcastes.

The above quotations from *Manusmriti* are a very small specimen of what has been written in it about caste system, Brahmins and *Shudras*, but are sufficient to prove the following generalizations about the Hindu and Sikh scheme of things.

a.) The higher the caste the lesser the body discomfort in carrying out its functions, and the lower the caste the greater the physical discomfort in carrying out its duties.

b.) The higher the caste the lesser its share in the production of wealth directly (physically), the lower the caste the greater its share in production of physical goods. The Brahmins had only the function of accepting gifts and fees for rendering service through words of mouth; the function of the second caste, *Kshatriyas*, involved collection of wealth by use of arms and forced taxes, i.e. by show of force, from *Vaishiyas* and *Shudras*. The third Caste, *Vaishiyas* owned means of production like land and business and mostly depended upon *Shudras* so far as physical labour was required. Almost entire burden of producing wealth fell on the fourth caste (the lowest one viz. *Shudras*), who of course, were allowed to own practically nothing and thus constituted the proletariat in the real sense of the term.

c.) All the rights and privileges were assigned to the Brahmins and all the deprivations and disabilities were meant for the *Shudras*. The higher the caste, the more numerous are their rights and privileges. Their disabilities, if any, were phoney. On the other hand, the lower the caste the greater the deprivations and disabilities with almost complete absence of even elementary human rights like right to life or property in the case of *Shudras*.

d.) The laws of *Manusmriti* so worked over time that the Brahmins exploited all the three castes lower to them. The Brahmins and *Kshatriyas* combined to exploit the *Vaishiyas* and *Shudras*; and the Brahmins, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishiyas* combined to exploit the *Shudras*, the lowest of the four castes. The 'Outcastes' suffered even more than the *Shudras*.

e.) A very important aspect of the caste system was the almost impossibility of the upward social mobility, lest the masses

aspired to move upward to claim the rights and privileges enjoyed by a small minority of Brahmins and the ruling caste of the *Kshatriyas*. All the channels – economic, political, social, educational and personal - which any man from the masses could use to rise upward - were closed to the *Shudras* with devices such as denial of education, keeping of arms, owning property and right to personal dignity, adopting well paid professions, marrying in higher caste etc. etc. Whereas the three higher castes could adopt temporarily profession of any caste in time of distress, the *Shudras* could not change their profession under any circumstances. There is no room for any person of any lower caste to acquire a special merit to improve upon his caste so far as the rules of caste were concerned. Trespassing into higher caste was prohibited at the risk of one's life.

f.) There is praise only so far as the Brahmins are concerned. There is no mention of any possibility of a Brahmin degrading himself or his status. Even the worst of a Brahmin is worthy of respect. On the other hand, there is no mention of merit in any *Shudra*. All *Shudras* are treated as animals in human form and all the indignities showered upon them. All types of hurdles are placed in the path of their progress to keep them as ignorant.

g.) There are three sources of power: knowledge, wealth and administrative power (physical/military force). With the help of any one of these powers, any individual can enjoy the benefits of the other two. A man of knowledge can create wealth for his use and can wield influence in political niches; a man of wealth can buy any source of knowledge and also have influence in political field; a man with administrative powers has actually all others under his thumb. This is what all the three higher castes did at least since modern times began. On the other hand, *Shudras* were deprived of all the three sources of power and above all the wall of Untouchability was created as an impregnable barrier between the *Shudras* and the dominant community. This reduced the *Shudras* to a position worse than that of a slave who could live with his master in the same premises and advance in life if he had enough talent. That is why slavery/apartheid could last no

more than a few decades while caste system has lasted for thousands of years.

g.) The *Sanskaras* (rites) from the stage of conception to the performance of the last rites of a person are different for different castes and things are so arranged that a person's caste can be recognized even from his name, his gait, dress worn by him, or his demeanour and behaviour pattern. The idea was to keep every person caste conscious at each step and each moment of his life. Impostors posing for higher caste were severely dealt with.

To recapitulate briefly, the following picture emerges showing the relative position of the four categories of Hindus comprising the four-fold caste system based on birth (and not worth) of the individual, with no scope for upward mobility, as per laws of Manu: -

The Brahmins are supposed to be born from the mouth of the Creator and hence are most sacred of all people. They are gods on earth. They act as priests to the three higher castes and as advisors to the rulers and make laws for them. They enjoy all the rights and privileges and suffer from no handicap or deprivation. They have right to acquire knowledge and exclusive rights to teach others whatever they want. They have exclusive rights to charities, gifts and fees for services rendered by them by word of mouth. All their demands are met *gratis*. They are free to use even arms in emergency and to adopt profession of any other caste in case of urgency. A Brahmin has right to reverence even from persons senior in age irrespective of the fact whether he is a learned man or an idiot. He is mostly exempt from punishment for any crime committed by him. If he is to be punished at all, the quantum of punishment has to be much less than in the case of other castes. Manual work is a taboo for him. Their profession has made them into very mean and cunning intellectuals who exploit others in the name of religion. Education and literacy being their profession, all of them got education of the day and held high posts by virtue of that. Even in today's India, whereas they are hardly about five percent of the population, they are in full control of all the temples, private

or public, are occupying about 80% of high posts and jobs in senior services like IAS/IPS/IFS/IAAS etc. and professions like medicine, law, media, university and college education etc. etc. Of late they have consolidated their position in politics too, the other castes just playing second fiddle to them. They use the physical force of the *Kshatriyas* and the monetary support of the *Vaishiyas* for their advantage and to sustain the system. No *Brahmin* does physical labour in any field of India's economy.

The *Kshatriyas* are supposed to be born from the arms of the Creator and hence destined to wield secular power over others. They are the only group entitled to the use of arms and rule over others. They can receive education from Brahmins but cannot teach anybody. They have a right to maintain social order but at the dictates of the Brahmins without any regard for ethics or morality. Normally they cannot adopt any profession of other castes except in distress. They do not do any manual work at all as they consider it below their dignity to do any labour with their hands. Their profession has made them into cruel oppressors of the masses and they live on whatever they can extract from *Vaishiyas* and *Shudras* by taxes or by force. They exploit everybody they want with their political power. Being previously ruling class, they monopolize ownership of lands as absentee landlords. The present day Rajputs, Yadavas, Kurmis, Jats, Patels, Marhatas etc. are offshoots of *Kshatriyas* and are now real oppressors of the *Dalits* in the villages. They now also monopolize military, paramilitary and police forces of the country at all levels. They are now becoming junior partners of *Brahmins* in political administrations and government services.

The *Vaishiyas* are supposed to be born from the thighs of the Creator. They can learn only from Brahmins but cannot teach anybody. They have no right to bear arms. They have exclusive rights to the main sources of production i.e. agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, trade and commerce, and money lending. They are the main producers of wealth but depend upon the *Shudras* so far as physical labour in farms and factories is required. This makes them immediate exploiters of the *Shudras*, and grabbers of money by any means, fair or foul. Except that

they cannot be intellectual leaders of the community or wield political powers directly, they suffer from no serious handicap. Their traditional powers have enabled them to put political leaders and bureaucrats in their pockets. Mostly they are the source of corruption so much prevalent in Government offices in India and financial institutions. Most of the financial scandals are the brain waves of the *Vaishiya* community. They get religious approval of the *Brahmins* and police protection of the *Kshatriyas* and legal cover from courts controlled by the *Brahmins*. They monopolize services in financial institutions and banks, and government business houses like public sector undertakings and are subverting these institutions for the private benefit of their families.

The *Shudras* are the bottom caste of the caste hierarchy. They are supposed to be born from the feet of the Creator and hence most despised and exploited of all people. Classically they are a community of slaves for all the other three higher castes. They have no right whatsoever, legal or human, personal or communal. A *Brahmin* has a right even to the life of *Shudra* and his property free of cost; in fact any high caste man could kill a *Shudra* for any reason. They have no right to education or to bear arms or to acquire property and cannot take up any of the professions of the higher castes whatever their capabilities. They are not supposed to retaliate for any injustice done to them. Their touch or sight pollutes the *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* and they are forced to live far away from the main village. Their reward is the leftover food, crumbs, discarded old clothes, and barest shelter away from the main village. Their only companions are dogs, pigs and donkeys. Their position was worse than that of the slaves of America who were not considered sub-humans while the *Shudras* were so treated. In nutshell, the *Shudras* have been totally dehumanized and converted into dumb driven cattle. In the present day India they are to be found last in every sphere and found only at the bottom layers of various facets of Indian society, with least assets, wealth, education, jobs, salaries and income etc. They are least organized and almost leaderless. They are not recruited in the army because they are considered non-

martial, they are not in the police force because they cannot inspire fear and awe in the public by use of ruthless force as high castes can, they are not in the civil services because they are considered not efficient enough as other competitors. They cannot do business or open small shops because their touch will pollute everything. They are considered fit only as slaves to work as scavengers or as manual workers in mines and plantations, as collectors of forest products, as grazers of cattle, as road builders or builders of skyscrapers, as fishermen, as entertainers (singly or with small animals like snakes and monkeys) or as dependents on flesh trade. Whatever their profession, the terms of trade are always against them. They have been deprived of all sources of power to such an extent and for so long a time that even under new dispensations of independent India they will take generations to come up as second-rate competitors of the other three higher castes. For the time being they are squeezed and plundered by the upper castes in their factories and farms.

Physical atrocities against *Dalits*, misappropriation of their lands, raping of their women, their economic boycott have been on the rise for some decades past. It is now intermediary landowner-castes that are the main culprits who operate under the protection of the dominant castes viz. *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* who control the state apparatus at all levels – centre, state, district and village *Panchayat*. The reason for this is that these castes are much less cultured than the *Brahmins*, and the *Dalits* being mostly agricultural labourers come into contact with these intermediary castes like *Jats*, *Kurmis*, *Koeris*, *Ahirs*, *Bhumihars*, *Yadavs*, *Marathas*, *Kunbis*, *Patels*, *Patidars*, *Patan Vadia*, *Vokkaligas*, *Lingayats*, *Telagas*, *Kammas*, *Reddis*, *Mudaliars*, *Vanniyars*, *Kallars*, *Vellals* and *Nairs* etc.

It seems the erstwhile White rulers of South Africa read *Manusmriti* and then framed their Apartheid laws of discrimination and segregation as under:

- i.) Laws segregating the dwellings of the Blacks and their schools.
- ii.) Laws preventing marriages between Blacks and Whites.

- iii) Laws barring entry of Blacks from public places (like hotels).
- iv) Laws abolishing political rights of the Blacks.
- v) Laws depriving the Blacks of the good lands etc. etc.

Apartheid laws made provision for at least separate schools for the Black. In India it was a punishable crime for the *Shudras* to obtain education. If Apartheid was a crime against humanity how about Caste-system?

The result of this discriminatory caste system is that all knowledge, wealth, rights, and culture is limited to hardly 20% of the population of India, the rest of the Indians are leading a life of drudgery like animals on two legs. The position of the untouchables is the worst of all. Whether it is provision of electricity or of sanitation, the turn of untouchables comes last of all. Almost all the untouchables are below the poverty line. Almost two third of the untouchables are illiterate as compared to about 45% of others. Enrolment of untouchable children at the primary level is very much lower than that of others and these children are limited to schools run by government where standards of education is the poorest, private schools being too costly for them. The dropout rate for the untouchable children is also very high for various reasons. More than half of the untouchables depend upon agriculture in villages as landless labourers. If any untouchable family owns land, it is too small for their livelihood and they are losing it to moneylenders and joining the ranks of agricultural labour or wage labour in cities. Most lands owned by them is un-irrigated and poor in quality. Land reforms have too many loopholes and are scuttled by the lawless landlords and bureaucracy. Manual scavenging still continues in towns and cities and all scavengers are untouchables. Their wages are too poor. There are constant threats to the life and property of the *untouchables* and sometimes large-scale massacres take place especially of landless labourers when they ask for proper reward for their work. In spite of reservations for jobs under government, the recruitment of the untouchables is too low and most of reserved jobs are not filled on one pretext or the other, though lots of educated *Dalits* are rotting as unemployed. In some departments

of government there is no consideration for their claims. There is no untouchable judge on the Supreme Court of India and about 25 high courts may have only two or three untouchable judges. The worst enemy of the untouchables is the practice of untouchability as it segregates them from the main stream of life and prevents them from going in for better-paid professions.

Is there any *Dalit* millionaire? How many *Dalits* pay taxes over one *lakh* rupees? But there are over a hundred Black billionaires in the US. Of the total companies registered in the US, racial/ethnic minorities own 12.5%. Do we have any big *Dalit* industrialist? There is not a single known *Dalit* journalist in any of the leading newspapers of India or any *Dalit* writer or artist in the modern media. But in America's Wall Street Journal, 17.1% journalists are of racial/ethnic minorities. Other major dailies – USA Today, New York Times, Los Angeles Times and Washington Post – all have a significant number of Black journalists hired under the Affirmative Action programme. Have you seen any US TV channel without Black anchors/newsreaders/artists? Remember, most American TV companies, including Hollywood, practice a policy of affirmative Action. While University of Delhi has only 1% *Dalit* teachers, at Harvard University 13.67% teachers are racial minorities. US business establishments have to submit an annual report of the racial/ethnic composition of their work force. Even the President of USA has Black representatives in his Cabinet and other bureaus.

So far as ordinary public life is concerned, we see mixed pairs (one partner Black and the other White) everywhere on the roads, in the shopping malls and the parks in the Western countries. In India, if two persons of different castes are even seen together in the ordinary course of life, they are just killed.

But *high caste* intelligentsia always finds race-based discrimination uglier than that of caste, and at the Durban Conference (Annex IV) the Government of India concealed the caste discrimination altogether.

It may be stated that Manu did not spare even the women of India. They have been compared to snakes, vermin

and poison. It is not relevant here to reproduce what he taught the Hindus about their daughters, wives and mothers; suffice to say that it is Manu's teachings which are responsible for the backwardness of Hindu women, and the indignities and disabilities they suffer from even today.

Dalit children and women suffer much more than their men folks under the hardships caused by birth-based and job-related caste system, which ties them down to unconquerable poverty.

Child is the father of man; he will be in adult life what he is taught to be in childhood. A child of a scavenger or a quarry worker, who gets no education or proper nourishment and sees no opportunity in life except the job of his parents, cannot be supposed to compete with children belonging to higher well off castes for any good job or any good profession. His life expectancy is reduced due to hunger and hard labour and he dies before his children enter their teens. Most of the *Dalit* children have to start earning their bread as soon as they learn running on their legs. Their parents cannot spare them for school even if it may be free to begin with. They learn to live a low life as soon as they begin to start thinking. The Constitution of India and Human Rights concepts have no meaning for them. They are victims of the consequences of hierarchical caste system. If they at all enter school compound, they are ill treated by their teachers and fellow high caste students who shun their touch. The high caste teachers mostly discourage the *Dalit* students and some time force them (by beating etc.) to stay at home rather than attend the classes lest they learn to ask for their rights or compete for jobs with high caste aspirants. High cost of education (fees, books and stationery etc.) prevents the poor *Dalit* families from sending their wards to school/college. That is how the *Dalit* children are forced to follow the ill paid and humiliating professions of their parents and thus caste-based discrimination continues.

The *Dalit* women have to work in fields, mines and building sites along with their fathers/husbands. Women working on farms become victims of the sexual desires of the landlords.

They have to work even during advanced stage of pregnancy to earn their living and can be seen with their newborn babies engaged in hard work in quarries and on building sites. They are poorly paid as nothing like minimum wage is applicable to work sites where these women are employed. There are no safety laws for them. In the villages if the high caste men get angry with the *Dalits*, they rape the *Dalit* women and some time parade them naked in village streets. Newspapers report such incidents quite often.

Devdasi system (temple prostitution) is a part and parcel of the religion taught to the *Dalits* of many castes, especially in South India. Small girls are 'married' to the gods (read Brahmin priests and temple workers) and they dance and serve in the temples throughout their adult life with obvious consequences. General prostitution is a profession almost 'reserved' for low-caste women and many castes are forced by tradition created by caste system and economic pressure to live on prostitution. The 'Sambandham' system of sexual relationship between Brahmin youth and *Nair* women without responsibilities of marriage (i.e., care of children and inheritance etc.) has gone out vogue only recently in Karala state. Unfortunately caste and religious thinking also sanctified this degrading ritualistic system.

There is still another aspect of the caste system in India. All the four castes are further sub-divided many more times into smaller and still smaller sub-castes and *Jatis* etc. on one ground or the other. Brahmins were so rigid in interpreting the *Manusmriti* that they ended up dividing themselves into well over 2000 Castes, sub-castes (*Jatis*) and Tribes, resulting in creating animosity amongst them by discrediting one another over trivial matters pertaining to exactness of religious ceremonies. Full list of these Castes, Sub-Castes and Tribes is given in Vol. I, pages 3-111 and Vol. II, pages xix – xivi of 'Hindu Tribes and Castes', (1879) by M. A. Sherring, M.A., LL.B., (Lond.) – (Fellow of the Calcutta University). On page xlvii of Vol. II Sherring says, "This list of Brahmanical tribes and clans, although long, is by no means exhaustive, and it is not unlikely there are, in some parts of the country, especially in Southern India, not a few

which have not been recorded. Yet, if they were known they would, in all likelihood, only strengthen the impressions produced by a careful investigation into, and analysis of, those now given. The diversity of names in the list is a singular phenomenon, considering that the Brahmans profess to belong to one family, to be associated together in the closest intimacy, and to be together dissociated from the rest of the human family. Yet in fact the profession of unity, as already shown, is merely nominal, and is in reality a monstrous perversion of the truth. Hundreds of these tribes, if not at enmity with one another, cherish mutual distrust and antipathy to such a degree, that they are socially separated from one another as far as it is possible for them to be, as much as Brahmans are from the lowest outcastes, neither eating nor drinking together, nor intermarrying, and only agreed in matters of religion, and in the determination to maintain the pride and secular dominancy of their order. The Brahmans display all the vices of a family divided against itself with more than ordinary intensity, for each one presumes on his purity of caste and birth, and affects the airs and ostentation of an eldest son and heir.”

While interpreting *Manusmriti* and on a binge of elevating their religious authorities upon one another, Brahmins created new castes to humiliate those who transgressed the boundaries of Caste System by intermarriages etc. Rev. Sherring on page xvii of his “Hindu Tribes and Castes” discloses: “Many castes were also created by persons driven from tribes through the infraction or non-performance of caste rules...From them sprang castes designated *Bhurjakantaka*, *Avantya*, *Vatadhana*, *Pushpadha*, and *Saikha* (Manu, Chap. X, 20, 21). Similarly, outcastes from the *Kshatriya* tribe founded the following castes: *Jhalla*, *Malla*, *Nicchivi*, *Nata*, *Karana*, *Khasa*, and *Dravira* (Manu, Chap. X., 22). From outcastes of the *Vaishya* tribe sprang the *Sudhanwan*, *Charya*, *Karusha*, *Vijanman*, *Maitra*, and *Satwata* castes (Manu, Chap. X., 23).”

On page xviii of his ‘Hindu Tribes and Castes’, Rev. Sherring enlightens us of Manu’s designs of fabrication of hate amongst human beings unprecedented in the literature of any

nation in the world. He says, "The clear and explicit statements of Manu are decisive on the causes of the multiplication of castes in his day. Indeed, it is evident that some of the lowest castes, perhaps many, were in part derived from the highest. The *Chandala*, for instance, although held in abomination by all the tribes, simply because his *Shudra* father was fortunate enough to marry a Brahmin woman, was in reality half a Brahmin. The *Ugra* too, who is depicted as a man of ferocious bearing, cruel and mean, was nevertheless half a *Kshatriya*, but, in public estimation, belonged to a debased tribe. If the existing low-caste races of India are, for the most part, as some suppose, the descendants and representatives of degraded castes created as above described, it must then in fairness be acknowledged, that many of them are more or less tinged with either Brahmanical, *Kshatriya*, or *Vaishiya* blood.

"This, however, very inadequately exhibits the whole case. The *Nishadda* was the son of a Brahmin and a *Shudra*; and the *Vaidiha*, the son of a *Vaishiya* and a Brahmani. The son of a *Nishada* married to a *Vaidiha* woman founded a new caste, as already stated, namely the *Karavera*, a low, ignominious tribe, whose occupation was to handle and trade in leather (Manu, Chap. X., 36); yet, as to blood, he was one half a Brahmin, one quarter a *Vaishiya*, and one quarter a *Shudra*. Again, the son of a *Nishada* father and *Chandala* mother was one half a Brahmin and the other half a *Shudra*. His caste of *Antyavasayin* had for its occupation the burning of dead bodies, and was held in the utmost abhorrence, "contemned even by the contemptible" (Manu, Chap. X., 36)."

"In order to make sure that the people dare not to transgress the boundaries of their respective Castes by intermarriages, Manu made them strong, infallible and horrendous by creating inferior castes for the coming generations of those who took such chances. For instance, in case of a *Shudra* marrying a *Kshatriya* mother, the male child was categorized as *Kshatri* or *Khatri* (half *Shudra*/half *Kshatriya*) who was supposed to hunt animals that lived in holes and was not permitted to perform rites in honour of his forefathers; was

termed as a most degraded mortal.” According to a list given in Vol. II of ‘Hindu Tribes and Castes’ by Rev. Sherring there are approximately 602 *Rajpoot* tribes in India.

“A male having *Chandala* (three-eighths Brahman blood) father and *Pukkasa* (five-eighths *Shudra* blood) mother was categorized as *Sopaka* and was termed as a sinful wretch. He was made to be an executioner whether he liked that gruesome job or not. Pages 8-51 of chapter X in *Manusmriti* are full of castes declared as inferior and despised.”

Having gone through all three volumes of ‘Hindu Tribes and Castes’, we can authoritatively say that the Indian nation is shamelessly divided into well over 4000 religions, castes, sub-castes, clans and tribes. Rampant corruption and extreme poverty are the cause of this scary fragmentation of the Indian society.

Further quoting ‘Manu, Chap. X., Pages 43 and 44’ on page xvii of Vol. I of his ‘Hindu Tribes and Castes’, Rev. Sherring say, “Inattention to religious duties, or neglect of Brahmanas, was evidently, in those days of punctilious ceremonies and priestly domination, sufficient reason for expulsion from caste. No fewer than twelve castes are stated by Manu to owe their origin to persons ejected from the Kshatriya tribe alone, for the reasons just given. They are as follows: Paundraka, Udra, Dravira, Kamboja, Yavana, Saka, Parada, Pahlava, China, Kirata, Derada, and Khasa.

“Had the creation of new castes continued to be made in succeeding ages with the same ease and rapidity as they were in these earlier times, it is plain that the caste system would have destroyed itself, in two ways, - first, by the multiplication of new castes throughout the land, and, secondly, by the intermarriages of all the castes. The increased strictures imposed upon the caste, especially upon the primary ones, and the prohibition of irregular marriages, - that is, of marriages of members of one caste with members of another, - gave in later years strength and vitality to a system which otherwise must soon have become extinguished.”

Finally, while summing up ‘Introduction’ to Vol. I of his ‘Hindu Tribes and Castes’ Rev. Sherring opines, “It is

common to speak of the castes of India in their relation to the Hindu religion; and in that light they may very properly be regarded. Yet they sustain another highly important relation. Ethnologically they are so many tribes and clans, with separate histories and customs. The members of a caste are doubtless, united together by peculiar sacred and social ties. In addition, they bear a tribal relation to one another of great significance. Each caste, in virtue of its distinctiveness, and of its holding no marriage connation with other castes, either in its neighbourhood or elsewhere, is in fact a tribe governed by laws of the most imperious character. The races of men, whether in ancient or modern times, have seldom, in any country, been divided into separate tribes and clans by such sharply-defined boundaries, over which it is impossible for one to pass to another, as we find separating the various castes of India. Indeed, so absolute and tyrannical is this spirit of exclusiveness, that the castes are taught to believe that there is a natural distinction subsisting between them which utterly forbids their union. In many cases, as already observed, the sub-divisions of the same caste hold no intercourse with one another, and do not intermarry."

Presently the worst in this respect are the *Dalits*, and they are unable to protect themselves due to these divisions and sub-divisions amongst themselves.

Now the question arises; why study *Manusmriti* when it is no longer enforceable by law? India's Constitution and civil and criminal laws have no relationship with *Manusmriti* and are secular and equitable to all the citizens of India. The simple answer is that religion has greater influence on the conduct of man than secular laws, and *Manusmriti* is a big part of Hindu religion. Human conduct in the ordinary course is the result of tradition and *Manusmriti* sets Hindu tradition. Courts enforce the current laws only if someone takes his case to the court of law while *Manusmriti* is enforced by dominant castes in each street of the Indian villages as a model code of conduct. One only needs to go through the daily newspapers and the reports of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the Internet (www.ambedkar.org) to see how

Untouchability is observed by a vast majority of the Hindu population and how atrocities are committed against the *Dalits*. Hundreds of castes mentioned in the *Manusmriti* by name still exist in India by those names with distinct social status as given to them by that book. It seems as if castes are in the culture, thoughts, beliefs, scriptures, epics, prayer, worship, rituals, songs, sayings and proverbs of the Hindus i.e. in the very style of life and scheme of things. It is as if caste-India and *Dalit-India* are living side by side because castes and caste distinctions are always present with the dominant caste against the *Dalits*, whatever their age, education, experience, position and status. Racial discrimination in the west pales into insignificance and lags far behind in enforcement *vis-a-vis* caste exploitation, caste oppression, caste deprivation, caste marginalisation, caste segregation, caste victimization, caste killings, caste persecutions. To talk of *Manusmriti* is just to remind the Brahmins and the *Kashtriyas* and the *Vaishiyas* how cruel and inhuman they have been towards the *Shudras* and Outcastes since ancient times and also to give a wakeup call to the latter that enough is enough and that they should rise and revolt against the Hindu scheme of things.

There are still diehards in India who think that Manu was an ideal lawgiver. The people of that mindset have put up a statue of Manu at the High Court of Rajasthan (a state in India). We have to re-educate such backward looking people by telling them what Manu says about the workers and peasants and women, apart from bogus cosmology.

Some scholars have tried to say that caste system is nothing but division of labour (class system) found all over the world. Dr. Ambedkar has dealt with this aspect exhaustively in his thesis. According to him Caste System is nothing but racism in religious garb. Division of labour has no relationship with birth whereas Caste System is based firmly on birth, both in theory and practice. In other democratic societies division of labour is voluntary, any person being free to qualify for or to adopt any profession,

while caste system forces one to follow the profession of the forefathers whether one likes it or not.

There has been division of labour in the West also with such low paid/dirty professions as leather making, shoe making, scavenging, weaving, blacksmithing, carpentry, bricklaying, bakery etc. but these professions were never tied up permanently with any particular groups of people (communities) as is the case in India, nor were the practitioners of these jobs made special targets of hatred and discrimination as we find under caste system. Persons born in families carrying on these lowly professions rose to become priests, high officials and politicians etc. without any difficulty. If we lookup any telephone directory of a North American city we will find such surnames as Baker, Barber, Butler, Carter, Carver, Carpenter, Cook, Dyer, Gardner, Hunter, Shoemaker, Smith and Waterman etc. There is no stigma of inferiority attached to these surnames as we find in the case of communities connoting such descriptions in India. No profession attracts disrespect in the West. Why is it not possible to bring about such culture of tolerance and acceptance in India?

Even if there were such bad institutions as slavery in USA or quite recently apartheid in South Africa, people realized the iniquity and injustice involved in them and abolished them. Feudalism has given place to democracy all over the world except in India where it continues, thanks to the Caste System supporting it. Even today, in tradition of *Manusmriti*, the high castes force the *Dalits* to live outside the main village, do not allow them to enter the village with shoes on, deny entry to places of worship or public places like hotels, public wells, water tanks, force them to eat carrion by giving them starving wages, force many castes to live on begging or thieving and others to adopt prostitution as a profession, deny the *Dalits* possession of land that belongs to them legally, have forced them to perform degrading rituals for them without any reward. Raping of *Dalit* women by higher castes on quite a large scale finds mention in the newspapers. High castes are so accustomed to keep the *Dalits* poor that they kill them if they ask for a proper wage. To cut it short, the caste system has condemned the *Dalits* to a

lifetime of slavery, segregation, degradation, humiliation, exploitation and violence.

The simple fact is that books like *Manusmriti*, which prescribes caste system and books like *Gita*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabhart*, which support caste system are embodiment of diseased mind. The Hindus however take them as word of God. Almost all their religious books tell us that persons of a particular caste are superior by birth to others of the same society and that it is society's wish that those privileged ones should be respected, revered and feared even if they are degraded human beings or complete idiots, that every word uttered by these privileged ones is a word of God and that no body should question their bona fides. If reader finds time to go through these books he will be convinced of this. For example, Krishna says in *Gita* that he is the creator of the world and that he has created the four *Varnas* (castes). In this way *Gita* says that caste system is God-made, and that it is there from eternity. This belief is enough to dissuade the lower castes from revolting against the caste system and trying to become free from the bondage of that system so much detrimental to them. This is what the *Dalit* masses still believe and so accept their lot as their destiny. Krishna also says that amongst men he (as God) is Brahmin. Thus he extols the Brahmins over others. The *Ramayana* and *Mahabhart* are literary reflections of feudalistic society and its values, their thrust being pro-Brahmin and pro-*Kshatriya* and anti-*Shudra* and anti-outcastes. Even the modern *Rishis* of the Hindus including Dayanand and Vivekanand uphold *Chaturvarva* and plead for only discontinuation of the practice of untouchability.

Another argument in favour of the caste system is that it led to specialization of professions. This means that the son of a sculptor will become a good sculptor and good teacher will produce a son who will be a good teacher etc. etc. This theory is exploded by the Western societies and even in today's India in our daily lives, where a doctor's son may turn out to be a vagabond and a shoemaker's son may become a good doctor. If their theory was correct how is it that all the inventions in

producing cloth, leather, shoemaking, printing, carpentry, tool making, gem and jewellery, sanitation, agriculture and animal husbandry have been made in foreign countries and not in India? Our Brahmins only learnt by rote the old manuscripts and used them to create fear and awe in the minds of the ignorant and uneducated masses. Just compare the role of the Brahmins with that of the priestly class in the West in the field of literature, art, philosophy, psychology and science, self-sacrifice in the service of the oppressed. The Brahmins never produced any rebel or freethinker. They only worked as 'closed' guild for self-aggrandisement and to fool others for their own benefits. How is it that the *Kashatriyas* had been defeated in all the battles against foreign invaders? They never developed any military science or weaponry. The invaders always came with better weapons and better strategy and won. Why did the *Kshatriyas* not specialize in war techniques rather than depend upon the astrology of the Brahmin? The fact is that by forcing children to adopt profession of their fathers, the Brahmins suppressed all natural talent in the country and we produced imitators and not creative minds.

In his main address Dr. Ambedkar has exhaustively dealt with the fanciful and impractical theory of *Guna-karma* (The theory which supports caste system but says that one's caste should be determined by one's qualities, works and character and not by birth) propounded by Swami Dayanand as the basis of caste system. Theorizing this way is like pumping breath into the mouth of the corpse of caste system. In this age of fundamental rights, it is foolish, wicked and destructive to talk of inequality of human beings. A person whose work does not have the same economic value as another's, still has equal worth and dignity and equally deserves respect of all. Poor, illiterate, physically weak human beings, have same basic rights to personal safety and honour and to equal social and political justice. Caste system, even of the variety proposed by Dayanand, goes against the above principles of equality, liberty and justice. It offers philosophical justification for a system having no other justification, a system that continues to be used as a justification for unjust acts that we condemn as civilized human beings. If

other societies of the world can do without discriminatory caste system why India does not follow their example?

What does Indian literature and history say about the *Shudras/untouchables/Dalits*?

Literature reflects all aspects of society in varying degrees. History should show the development of society in all its aspects though normally it emphasises political developments more than economic or social. How did these people figure in literature? The literary people neglected them in the same way as the society neglected them. The oldest records in the Indian history are the *Vedas*, especially the *Rig-Veda*. Therein these people are depicted as the enemies of the *Aryans* who were encroaching upon the land of these aboriginal people. They were given the worst epithets like *Chandalas*, *Asuras*, *Anaryas* etc. and the gods were exhorted to annihilate them from earth. There is no mention of how these aboriginals were living, earning their livelihood or managing their affairs. The *Puranas* also describe them as uncivilized and uncultured people so far as they came into contact with the *Aryans*. The epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabhart*a deal mostly with the Brahmin priestly caste and the ruling *Kshatriya* caste. If the *Shudras/outcastes* find any mention, they have very minor individual roles of boatmen or hunters etc. They were suffering under caste system but no poet or writer shed a tear for their misfortune. Even neo classical literature (Kalidas etc.) has no detailed description of the situation of *Shudras* or *Outcastes*. In olden times only Megasthenes (Greek traveller), Fa-Hian and Hwan-Tsang (Chinese travellers) and Kautilya's *Arthshastra* give some factual description of the *Shudras* who lived on the outskirts of the villages and towns and whatever they wrote makes a pitiable reading. These people lived as prescribed by Manu's laws – isolated, marginalized, exploited and destitute.

The single most important reason for this neglect and indifference to the fate of these unfortunate people was the belief of the Hindus that these people are suffering because of their past *Karmas* and deserve no pity or help. Like animals they need not even be taken note of. To round off this item of literature,

suffice to say that only British missionaries took note of the untouchables and began to write about them. They did research on the folk religions of these marginalized people and wrote about the *Dalit* saints like Ravidas, Namdev and Kabir etc. They even wrote books on various low caste communities like *Chamars*, their origin and their style of life. We have the rare example of Munshi Prem Chand writing about the untouchables. It is not until the *Dalit* poets and writers of Maharashtra began to write about the problems and aspirations of the *Dalits* that *Dalit* literature took birth and now it is an India wide phenomenon.

Talking of pure history, how did the ancient invaders affect these people? Not the least. Most invaders settled down as ruling communities over big or small areas or took to agriculture and usurped the cultivable land of these poor people by force. This is how almost all *Dalits* are now landless. Later on these invaders merged in the Hindu society as castes and sub-castes till the Muslims invaded India from Middle East or from North West. They took note of the caste system of the Hindus only to take advantage of its divisive nature – to defeat and to rule over the Hindus. Their egalitarian social system did not bring about any change in the attitude of the Hindus towards the poor untouchables, nor the Muslims tried to force the Brahmins to change their attitude as the existing situation was to their advantage. If they used force to convert the Hindus to Islam, it was limited to those who practiced their religion obtrusively, otherwise Delhi and its roundabout regions of Haryana and United Provinces would have been totally converted to Islam. All the *Dalits* would have also been converted to Islam as Hinduism was only skin deep with them and the Hindus hated them. In fact local poor Muslims would have been a liability to the ruling Muslim outsiders. It is interesting to note that the caste Hindus as whole treat all the Muslims as untouchables, and the Muslims treat the low caste Hindus as untouchables in the same way as the caste Hindus do.

The general impression is that the British tried to eliminate caste distinctions. This is wrong. They only utilised the *Shudra* communities as mercenaries so long as they needed them

to conquer the Hindu and Muslims rulers of the time, and later discarded them from their army under caste compulsions after the battle of Plassey (1757) when the high castes began to offer themselves for recruitment in the British army but refused to work along with the *Shudras*. The biggest blow to the *Shudra* recruitment in the British army was the preference of the British for the Sikhs of Punjab after their kingdom was conquered by the British as the Sikhs proved to be loyal to them within ten years of their defeat i.e. at the time of mutiny of 1857. Then the British introduced the idea of martial and non-martial communities and *Dalits* in general were declared as non-martial.

The British were more concerned about the security of their rule rather than the social reform or even conversions. Even the courts recognised the laws of Manu where the British law was silent. Out of the courts and offices, the Hindus were left undisturbed to practice caste system and untouchability. They made no special efforts to educate the untouchables as a caste. No political importance was given to them until Ambedkar appeared on the scene though communal politics had come to the fore from the early 20th century. So far as the missionaries were concerned they mostly acted on their own and did not concentrate on the untouchables in any special manner. For example their missionary schools were open to all the communities with no special consideration for the untouchables.

All this shows that the tentacles of caste are too widespread, powerful and overwhelming and have been defying all onslaughts on its fortress.

The social and religious movements that arose during the Muslim and the British rule had also no major effect on the condition of the untouchables as none of these movements was specifically intended for the uplift of these people. A big claim is however made by the Sikhs that their religion arose to eliminate caste discrimination and this needs to be examined. Before something is said later, let it be stated that Sikhism is better than Hinduism in this respect because it does not teach caste discrimination. However, if Sikhism was effectively against caste-ism how is that they are still observing caste among

themselves and observe untouchability towards low caste Sikhs? If the system of common *Langar* as it now exists, had its origin in Guru times, how is it that in the villages of Punjab the high caste Sikhs (Jats) do not allow the *Dalits* even to enter the main hall of the Gurdwara, not to speak of participation in the *Langar* preparation, or sitting along with the high castes for taking the food? Why the *Singh Sabha* Movement of early twentieth century had to struggle in the Golden Temple of Amritsar for acceptance of *Krah Prashad* (sweet pudding) of the low caste Sikhs brought there? The greatest agitator in this movement was an untouchable Sikh named Dit Singh. A parallel example from *Radha Swami History* is very relevant.

Sant Sawan Singh (Gill), a Jat Sikh promoted the *Radha Swami* Movement of Beas in a big way in the early twentieth century. He started *Langar* at his head quarters of Beas for his followers most of whom were Jat Sikhs and low caste people. It had two separate kitchens, one for high castes and one for untouchables, in spite of his teachings of equality and brotherhood mostly based on the Sikh scriptures. No body ever protested because untouchability was accepted as something normal amongst the Sikhs and the Punjabis. It was only October 1951 that these two kitchens were merged and all followers made to eat together without distinction of caste by Sant Charan Singh who was a law graduate and understood the implications of untouchability having been abolished under the Constitution of India in January 1950. If Sikhs in general had no practice of untouchability under the Gurus how Sant Sawan Singh who was an educated and intelligent Sikh started following the practice of untouchability in the enlightened age of the twentieth century.

Is it too much to say that the same process took place in the Sikhs giving up the practice of untouchability in their Gurdwaras. It is during the time of Guru Gobind Singh that untouchables came to the Sikh camp (which was previously dominated by the *Khatris, Brahmins and Jats*) because his movement was revolutionary and revolution always attracts downtrodden people. Armed struggle does not accommodate the luxury of social discrimination to be practiced in its camps.

Unfortunately it was only during actual fights in the battlefields that caste did not crop up but it did as soon as these ‘soldiers’ returned to their families. It was the case especially after the Mughal rule faded away in Punjab and the Sikh came to power first as rebels, then as *Misaldars* and later as rulers under Ranjit Singh. Why was there no *Misal* of the untouchable Sikhs? Why no big administrator/advisor of Ranjit Singh was from amongst the low caste people? How is it that all land in Punjab belongs to Jat Sikhs and all the *Dalits* are landless agricultural labourers? How is that even cremation grounds are separate for the *Dalits* in Sikh dominated villages? The answer is caste system. That is why we have *Brahmin* Sikhs, *Khatris* Sikhs, *Arora* Sikhs, *Ahluwalia* Sikhs, *Jat* Sikhs, *Saini* Sikhs, *Nai* Sikhs, *Kumhar* Sikhs, *Chamar* Sikhs (*Ramdassias*), *Chuhra* Sikhs (*Mazhabi*), *Tarkhan* (*Ramgarhia*) Sikhs. Even fully land based communities like Jats, Kamboj and Sainis have not been able to merge into one community. The fact is that largely Sikhs remained a part and parcel of the Hindu social system and followed the same practice of caste-ism and untouchability as did the Hindus.

The present day social liberalism of the Sikhs can be traced to their association with British army in a big way where they saw more egalitarian system and also to their going abroad.

Credit must be given to the *untouchable* saints (like Kabir, Ravidas and Namdev) who castigated caste-ism in very clear terms of protests, pathos and passion and in the context of this world dominated by the high caste Hindus. They were naturally very critical, carping and disparaging in their attitudes towards the Hindu practice of caste and untouchability. Their teachings find a place in the Sikh holy *Granth*. The Sikhs should follow the teachings of their scripture and give up the practice of untouchability and caste-ism. This lead should come from Jat Sikhs who dominate the Punjab politics, Punjab administration, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak* Committee, and social and economic life in the villages. However, these days we find them promoting Jat Sikh chauvinism and Jat Sikh arrogance, most notably in their pop music, indirectly denigrating other castes. It is unfortunate that neither *Akal Takhat* nor the preachers in the

Gurdwaras nor politicians/social workers nor writers/generalists have condemned this tendency.

The issue of untouchability is the most serious one for the *Dalits* because this is their greatest handicap in the society in which they live. For the three higher castes, as per *Manusmriti* there is some differentiation between them but there is no bar of untouchability. It is only the *Shudras*, untouchables and outcastes who are singled out for active discrimination through the mechanism of untouchability, an institution unique to the Hindus in the whole world. No other society observes such “touch-me-not-ism”; caste and untouchability are co-terminus. It is a disease of the mind, there being no physical basis for the same. It creates uncalled for hatred for the untouchables who develop inferiority complex due to constant maltreatment from birth. A clean and healthy person is designated as an untouchable simply because of birth and made to accept that status throughout his life and thus to demean himself in the eyes of others. That is why it is much worse than racism, though racism is also equally condemnable. It is on account of untouchability that the low castes cannot be a part of the main stream of the society nor can they enter business nor adopt any honourable or remunerative profession. The untouchable children are made to feel small from their very childhood and lie low in their dealings with other castes. Their growth is stunted. This single factor is largely responsible for their segregation, victimization and marginalisation. It is a pity that in spite of untouchability having been abolished under the Constitution of India and also there being a substantive Act against it (the protection of Civil Rights Act) and other social disabilities, this disease is still continuing. The cases registered under that Act are only a tip of the iceberg of discrimination as all such cases are not reported to the police or the latter do not register them and the public prosecutors do not vigorously pursue even those cases.

The above facts are sufficient to show that caste-ism is unnatural, unethical, anti humanity and anti national.

CAN CASTE BE KILLED?

(Khushi Ram)

“On 26 January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life will have inequality... . We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy, which we have so laboriously built up.”

(Dr. Ambedkar)

When Dr. Ambedkar wrote his thesis ‘Annihilation of Caste,’ it was meant to be an address at the conference of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* of Lahore (now in Pakistan), an organization devoted to social and religious reform of the Hindus. He therefore talked of the changes that should be brought about in the mental attitude of the Hindus towards the *Untouchables*. He did not mention other measures that should be taken to abolish Caste System, although he has touched upon such measures in his other writings. We may therefore try to look at the problem from other angles too.

Most of the ills of present day India are directly or indirectly connected with Caste System. Even historically the main cause of the downfall of India and its being conquered and ruled by foreigners like the Greeks, the Huns, the Arabs, the Turks, the Mughals and the British, can be traced back to Caste System. In spite of independence since 1947, India continues to be one of the most backward countries in such matters as infant mortality, women’s education, per capita production, national debt and corruption etc. because of the shackles of caste which enables only a minute percentage of its population to compete with the best of brains of the world, while keeping the masses in morass of poverty and ignorance. Thousands of low-caste people are leaving Hinduism each year for other religions because of their desire to escape the cursed caste system in which they are made to feel inferior to higher castes.

One wonders how the government of India dares to criticize the White people for practicing racism while allowing discrimination entrenched in caste system to continue in India. Racism is discrimination between people of different races and caste system is profession and descent-based discrimination by higher castes against the lower castes of the same society. If racism is a crime against humanity, Caste System is a greater crime.

The Hindus are so degenerated that they take Caste System for granted. Almost every book of the Hindus makes a reference to Caste System approvingly, applauds upper castes and degrades the lower ones. There has to be a great struggle against culture of caste hierarchy, the deification of Brahmins and against hatred and intolerance towards the *Shudras* and other *Dalit* communities. No reconstruction of Indian society is possible without this battle of ideas. In modern terms, the battle is against racism (feeling of *Brahmins*, *Rajputs* etc. that they are superior to *Dalits* via caste system), against capitalistic exploitation (the *Dalits* are without assets and dependent only on their labour power), against political hegemony of *Brahman-Bania* combination (centralized power of government machinery without adequate decentralization of administration and share of *Dalits* at all levels of administration) and against cultural domination (the phenomenon of *Hindutava* to the total disregard for the other contributory sources of culture like Buddhism and Islam), and last of all against irrational and superstitious approach to life (through which *Brahmins* and other parasitic elements are economically and emotionally exploiting the ignorant masses.)

With the introduction of modern transport like railways and buses and hotels and large-scale industry and growth of cities, the system of untouchability should lose its impact, but it has not, because most of the population of India lives in villages. Even people living in towns and cities continue their social contacts with their kith and kin back in the villages from where they migrated and thus continue to stick to caste system by sheer force of tradition.

Many advocate inter-caste marriages to kill caste. But in inter-caste marriages too, one party has to lose its caste and accept that of the other with children being accepted in that caste. Thus the castes of the parties concerned are not destroyed.

Does change of profession or economic position make any difference to the caste? A look at the way the Indians residing in the foreign countries (doing the same type of odd jobs, having same economic status and with no reason for continuing to observe caste) still continue to believe in caste amongst them, shows that the answer to this question is also in the negative. According to the Human Rights Watch (last week of August 2001) "caste has migrated with the South Asian Diaspora to firmly take root in East and South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, Surinam, the Middle East, Malaysia, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, North America and other regions.... ." The report also says that 'discrimination against low caste untouchables is visible in temple practices, in America, Canada as well as Britain' (so much so that the low castes have been forced to set up their own separate *Gurdwaras* and temples). It said that caste based associations abroad are rising in numbers and are also providing funds and political support for a resurgence of caste fundamentalism in South Asia as well. The report further says that "the families openly advertise their caste preferences in the matrimonial sections of Indian community papers in North America and Europe (a practice quite common within India)...Physical violence has also been known to erupt following inter-marriages between Punjabis of high and low castes settled in Britain.....South East Asian countries where Indian population migrated hundreds of years ago to work on plantations and farms, still witness caste based discrimination."

Has spread of education and democracy made any difference? Highly educated persons are emotionally attached to caste. With increase in education and political awareness the feelings for caste are rising higher and higher. Almost each caste has its own political party or a faction thereof and all political parties plan their political agenda according to the caste configuration of their constituents.

Does religious reform make any difference? Have the teachings of religious reformers like Kabir, Ravidas, Nanak, Dayanand, Ram Mohan Roy etc. made any difference? Have their followers not created more castes than previously existed? What about the latest religious movement of *Radhaswamis* whose following runs into millions? Like the Sikhs whose anti-caste-ism is limited to *Guru Ka Langar* only, their commensality is limited to common *Bhandara* (kitchen service) only.

A *Jat Radhaswami* will prefer a *Radhaswami Jat* for marriage and other social interaction rather than a *Chamar Radhaswami*. Outside the *Bhandara*, the *Radhaswamis* observe untouchability in the same way as ordinary Hindus and Sikhs do. The *Radhaswami Guru* does not touch the topics of Untouchability and caste system in his discourses as if these two evils do not exist. Almost seventy percent of the *Radhaswamis* come from the so-called low caste people, but little representation is given to these communities on the management committee or the headquarters secretariat. Of course, the *Dalits* have the 'honour' of being nominated as *sewadars* (those who serve others) at all their functions.

Before suggesting remedies for the disease of caste, let us enumerate the institutional hurdles on the way, apart from wrong religious teachings and traditional conservatism of the Hindus.

a.) The quickest remedy of the disease of caste system is 'total' revolution in the country, revolution in religious, economic, social, cultural and educational fields, so that the mindset of every body concerned is recast. Are the Indians prepared for this? Not voluntarily. Can such a total revolution be brought about by force? Yes, but who is to bring about such a revolution? The Untouchables are in a minority, they are thinly scattered all over the country and are totally disunited on caste, region and language basis. They cannot therefore hold on long enough in any armed struggle against the upper castes. Their presence in the civil police, para-military and armed forces is negligible and these forces favour status quo and will gladly suppress any uprising by the Untouchables. Suppression of grass-root

movements for ordinary Human Rights or for more empowerment of the masses through decentralization of power is a daily occurrence.

b.) Can politically motivated honest civil administration bring about rapid changes favouring the Untouchables? The greatest hurdle will be the conservatively inclined law courts (right up to the Supreme Court of India) that are almost totally manned by the upper caste vested interests. The courts, in the name of equality and liberty so much vaulted about by well-placed higher castes, will pull down any revolutionary measure of the Government (but never apply these principals for bringing down obviously discriminatory caste walls to create social equality and personal liberty). For example, the Supreme Court has mostly stood in the way of the Government giving due share to the Untouchables and Tribes in the administrative and higher educational systems of the country. The lower courts have thrown out very large number of cases brought to them of atrocities against the *Dalits* on one pretext or the other. The public prosecutors who mostly belong to the higher castes are least interested in pursuing such cases successfully.

c.) Another hurdle in the way of reducing the rigors of caste system and emancipation of the Untouchables is the bureaucracy of the country mostly manned by the upper castes, especially at higher decision-making levels. They try to water down the proposals of well-intentioned political bosses in this regard and to reduce the impact of such reforms through poor implementation of the policy. That is the reason why Dr. Ambedkar fought for proper share of the *Dalits* in government services. So even if the *Dalits*, with the help of sympathetic elements from other sections of the populations, come to occupy ministerial seats, they will find it difficult to put their reforms through as fast as they would like to do, in view of the resistance put forth by indifferent bureaucracy, both in feeding their bosses with proper information while framing the required laws and at the time of implementation of the legislative measures.

d.) Can the theories of 'acculturation' (*Sanskritisation*) of lower castes (by imitation of higher castes) and of 'percolation'

(trickle-down theory in economics) hold out any hope? Here the laws of economics, sociology and psychology work as conservative forces against the progress of *Dalits*. Communities with large tracts of land will always remain landlords; families with established business firms will always be in the forefront in business field. Children of highly paid professionals will have better chances to enter these professions than the children of poor people for obvious reasons. Simply copying of higher castes in cultural matters will not help. In fact it is a drain on their economic resources. The stigma of Untouchability is enough to keep the Untouchables away from socialization with higher castes and thus to keep them away from high echelons of power and influence whether political, economic, social or administrative. People already in position of authority tend to help their own relatives or caste people. Unfortunately the high caste people firmly consider the *Dalits* to be intruders into their traditional domains of influence, work and livelihood.

Those from amongst the *Shudras* who have become MLAs, MPs and Ministers or who have benefited from quota/permit system reserved for the *Shudras* in business field and have set up their own business/industrial units or have entered Government service at higher levels against posts reserved for the *Shudras*, no longer live amongst the poor people even after retirement. They migrate to cities and decline to educate or lead the *Shudras* politically. They are the greatest betrayers of their community and of the cause of Dr. Ambedkar whose efforts brought them what they possess today. The percentage of such persons going up the ladder economically or socially is of course very small and the rest of the community is where it was decades ago.

Another set of retrogrades are the *NEO* Brahmins (*sants* and *swamis*) moving amongst the *Dalits* as their *gurus*. Like Brahmins they fleece them and make them fatalistic and superstitious and keep them busy with religious 'games' and with hopes of heaven rather than exhort them to struggle in real life here and now for their emancipation. They are introducing

costly rituals and *sanskaras* in the name of high culture simply to dig deep into the pockets of these people. Whereas other communities are becoming secular minded through education and scientific knowledge, the *Shudras* are taking to religion in a big way under the influence of the semi-literate bogus preachers. Instead of killing caste sentiments at least amongst all sections of *Shudras*, they preach sectarian caste-ism in order to keep their followers in their fold. It is they who segregated *Ramdasia Sikhs* from *Chamars* and *Valmiki/Mazhabi Sikhs* from *Chuhra*. This is particularly true of Punjabi *Chamars* living in UK, USA and Canada who are copying the Sikhs in setting up separate *Gurdwaras* and going through costly rituals. They pay lip service to Dr. Ambedkar but actually work against his mission. All these instances show that the two theories of 'acculturation' and 'percolation' are of no effect.

Does it mean that caste cannot be killed at all?

It can be killed if the government/society takes positive and comprehensive measures in all the fields, which contributed to the creation and consolidation of castes and Caste System over thousands of years. Caste System is now like a hydra headed dragon; cutting one head does not make any difference, all the heads have to be cut off at the same time. There has to be a big religious, economic, social and cultural revolution in the country and anybody taking recourse to caste in any way may have to be punished and people who have suffered on account of discrimination helped to get rid of the caste complex and its handicaps. The government machinery from the central government to the local self-government has to play a big role for this social and religious reform. The following are some of the suggestions made in this behalf:

1. Untouchability is abolished in law but not in practice. Government should enforce and implement an effective and time-bound programme to abolish untouchability and other similar practices in all spheres of life.
2. Like untouchability, caste system should be abolished with a suitable law. Unless caste system as such is abolished, talk of all

Indians being equal is hollow. The use of the word 'caste', or any caste name or surname indicative of caste and caste titles like *Pandit Ji*, *Thakur* etc. should be made a punishable offence. To begin with, this law may be made applicable to government servants, elected representatives of government, private organizations dealing with government and thereafter it should be made applicable to all the citizens of India.

3. Books like *Manusmriti*, which have no religious philosophy as such in them but contain only social codes like caste system and rules regarding status of women etc. and have since been superseded by the Constitution of India and various other legal codes, should be banned. Religious books like *Gita*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabhart*a should be revised either to delete references to caste or it should be made obligatory that whenever a reference to caste occurs therein, an explanation should be given that these teachings are now out- of-date. Hindu religion has been changing over time and there is no reason why it should not change further to abolish caste.

4. Masses have to be educated that religious books are not word of God as propagated so far, but composed by persons with religious bent of mind, some well informed and others superstitious and vested interests, and that these can be revised or reinterpreted.

5. Use of caste and caste names should be banned for political and economic activity. No religious or charitable trust or social organizations like schools, *Dharamshalas* and hospitals etc., should be allowed to operate with caste names. All such trusts etc. should be for all the citizens of India without distinction of caste or religion.

6. No media of mass appeal like newspapers, radio, TV and cinemas etc. should be allowed to make a mention of caste directly or indirectly except to condemn it.

7. All textbooks having any reference to caste in them should be revised. Schools and colleges should emphasize human rights education and help their students to develop as rational an attitude in social and religious matters as possible.

8. The Priestly class should cease to be hereditary amongst any caste in Hindu society. Every Hindu should be eligible to become a priest; preferably there should be seminaries for producing priests who should be licensed by an appropriate authority before they can practice their profession.
9. All Hindu temples and religious places should be open to all Hindus irrespective of social and economic status and Hindus should man their temple kitchens without reference to caste.
10. Separate cremation grounds for low castes should be abolished.
11. Comprehensive laws should be made to ban caste-bound free ritual labour, the *devadasi* system and other similar practices where *Dalit* men and women are exploited.
12. Anybody showing caste-based or profession-based discriminatory behaviour should be severely punished by special courts set up to try cases of caste based crimes so that caste as a source of violation of human rights is brought into focus.
13. For some years couples with inter-caste marriage (across untouchability line i.e. between *Shudras* and other high castes) and their children may be given some incentive like cash awards, relaxation for getting jobs or business permits etc. Persons trying to thwart inter-caste marriages and inter-dinning should be severely punished.

Some critics may say that such measures are too harsh. But Caste System as a practice was also harshly and brutally forced upon unwilling masses and can be uprooted only in a similar harsh way. Reforms short of that have failed in the past and will fail again.

If the Hindus are not agreeable to adopt such strong measures (and the past experience shows that they won't), the low caste people should give up Hinduism and go over to Buddhism (or any other religion), which has been historically anti-Brahmin and anti-caste. This was the advice given by Dr. Ambedkar towards the end of his life. In a talk on the BBC in 1956, Dr. Ambedkar gave his reasons for preferring Buddhism. He said: "I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. All other religions are

bothering about God, soul, and life after death. Buddhism teaches *prajna* (understanding as against supernaturalism). It teaches *karuna* (love). It teaches *samata* (equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life on earth. These three principles of Buddhism make an appeal to me.” ‘Buddha and His Dhamma’ by Dr. Ambedkar can transform one’s outlook on life and society and make one a new man free from all fears and bondage. If the *Dalits* become full fledged Buddhists, half of their battle is won as their inferiority complex will be gone.

Because caste has a cultural and spiritualistic aspect also, Dr. Ambedkar’s findings need further exposition. His advice is the culmination of *Dalit* search for alternative cultural and spiritual ideology from within the Indian tradition. It will embrace the *Adi-dharmi* movement of Punjab started by Babu Mangu Ram, the *Adi-Hindu* Movement of UP and *Adi-Dravida* Movement of South India which withered away for want of alternative ideology to replace what these people had learnt by imitating the Hindus. It is also linked with the *Siddha-Nath*, the *Allavar*, and overall ascetic traditions, which emphasize individual worth rather than high hierarchical status, downgraded sacrificial rituals, temple worship and bibliolatry and emphasized honest and simple living and *Sahaj Marg* for self realization and self fulfillment. The *Dalits*, instead of singing praise of heroes of higher castes, will have their own heroes, will have opportunity to take control of their religion into their own hands, forge their own identity on all India basis (instead of regional or caste based ideology in various parts of the country as heretofore). This non-Hindu tradition denounces the theories of *Karma* and reincarnation, which led to fatalistic attitude and enslavement of their minds. The non-dualistic spiritual doctrine gives them self-confidence, self respect and equalitarian individuality and freedom. For the poor *Dalits* the spiritual goal is not to transcend the world but to survive within it with dignity. Only Buddhism as revived by Dr. Ambedkar is capable of meeting these demands.

The *Dalits* are right in their emphases on their ideological struggle against *Manusmriti* and against the theory that Caste System is God-given and that one should accept it in spirit of surrender to God and leave it to Him to relieve the sufferings of the devotees. The ruling castes can maintain their rule only as long as they control the minds of the ruled through the ideological cobwebs woven by their ideological leaders and enforced by the state apparatus. So the spider's web must be cleared and hence the importance of struggle against "*Manu-ism*".

How much does this ideology control the Dalit masses? How much do they struggle against their own practice of caste distinctions and caste hierarchy amongst themselves? There are about one thousand *Dalit* castes (apart from tribes) all over India who neither inter-marry nor inter-dine amongst themselves and are as apart from one another, as they as a whole group are apart from high caste Hindus. They have even further divisions into sub-castes. Take the example of *Chamars* of Punjab. Till the beginning of the 20th century, they were a closely-knit single community. Now they have been split into *Ramdasia* (*Sikhs*), *Ravidasia* (*Hindus*) and Buddhist. Some of them call themselves *Adi-dharmi* (who follow neither Hinduism nor Sikhism). Similar is the case with *Chuhars* of Punjab who are further divided as *Mazhabi* (*Sikhs*), *Valmiki* (*Hindus*) and *Masihi* (*Christians*). This may be the case with other major *Dalit* castes in other parts of the country. The rivalry between *Chamars* and the *Chuhars* of Punjab, between *Malas* and *Madigas* of Andhra Pradesh and between *Matangs* and *Mahars* of Maharashtra is well known. Their own division into castes and sub-castes prevents the mobilization of all *Dalits* as one mass. Unless they adopt inter-dinning, inter-marriage, and social inter-course amongst themselves, they cannot unite and fight against caste system, both as an ideology and a practice.

Another tragedy of the lower castes is that their own caste *Panchayats* enforce caste rules on their members more rigorously than other castes would enforce on them. Even these days some caste *panchayats* settle caste problems and punish

their members by excommunication and fines etc., if any member breaks the caste rules like marrying out side caste or dinning with too low a caste.

How can the *Dalits* agitate for abolition of castes and caste system when they themselves observe caste rules and are victims of xenophobia created by caste psychology? This is all due to the culture of caste hierarchy around them, which they copy.

Apart from the measures suggested above for religious and social reform of the Hindus, some economic and political measures have also to be taken for removing the effects of caste system and the following suggestions are made in this behalf.

i.) Ultimately in the present age of enlightenment and democracy, caste is a matter of profession and economic power. All well paying professions like medicine, teaching, law and government service etc. are monopoly of the high and rich castes because such professions require costly schooling for long period of time which poor low caste people cannot afford. It is suggested that education should be free and uniform, and all the schools and colleges should be of the same type. Private elite schools/colleges should be abolished. Students coming from poor families should be granted scholarships in professional and technical institutions apart from remission of fees.

ii.) Agricultural land is great source of earning, power and prestige in rural areas. It should be held by actual tillers of the soil and not by absentee landlords, big or small. Under land-ceiling laws, family landholdings should be small (not hundreds of acres as now allowed) and surplus land should be distributed amongst landless labourers/tenants who are mostly *Dalits*. There can be fresh consolidation of holdings in each village under which some land should be earmarked for each agricultural labour family and the rest distributed among farmer-owners. (If necessary, the government may have to create a special revolving fund for compensation). If somebody holds some land but later gets a job, he should not have any right to its produce till he comes back to that land as a tiller. The idea is that no body

should have unearned income, which is the source of economic powers and social prestige of communities like Brahmins and *Rajputs* who hold high posts under government or have adopted good professions like doctors and lawyers and still own lot of land, landed property or other businesses in cities. It is for experts to suggest how to control parasitic capitalistic class and to stop monopolistic tendencies in trades and industry and real-estate in cities.

The idea of giving some minimum land holding to each *Dalit* family in the village is not farfetched or impossible. The tribal people of Kerala State had been agitating for land and on October 16, 2001, a seven point agreement between the state government and the *Adivasi Dalit* Action Council which was spearheading the agitation, was signed, according to which, interalia, "Wherever possible, the government is to provide five acres (two hectares) of land to each landless *Adivasi* family; at other places the offer is a minimum of one acre, which can go up to five acres, depending on the availability of land."

Unearned income, if allowed at all, should be highly taxed. Income tax rates should be progressive and avoiding income tax payment made difficult. Progressive inheritance tax can be tapped to reduce inequalities in holding of land and wealth.

iii.) The Government should ensure full proportional representation of *Dalits* based on their population in all sectors of society including civil services, police, army, judiciary, media, temple services, large scale commercial and industrial organizations (Public and Private). Access to these sectors has been denied the *Dalits* for thousands of years and this loss must now be made good so that they can come up to the level of other advanced communities. Unless India establishes social equality by bringing down the caste system and removes distressing poverty by welfare measures practiced by many civilized governments of today, it should not disallow reservations of jobs for the low caste people. What logical function does the caste system serve other than reservation of certain types of jobs and functions for certain communities? Why do privileged people try

to stick to their age old privileges while denying any short-term privileges to those who have been denied their legitimate right for thousands of years? First ban caste system, establish social equality and adopt welfare measures like free education and basic housing etc. and then come forward with the suggestion that there should be no reservation of jobs on the basis of caste or that these reservations should be on the basis of financial backwardness and not Caste.

iv.) Building separate residential colonies for low castes should be stopped. This reinforces segregation. Special schemes should be evolved to intersperse low caste houses amongst high caste residences in villages with special grants and aids where necessary.

v.) According to the caste system, the dirty and arduous professions like scavenging, tanning, shoemaking and manual hard labour were “reserved” for the low caste people and these were the most low paid professions. In fact, no wage but only minimum subsistence in-kind payments were made to them. This has to be reversed. The scavengers, especially in towns and cities, should get very good housing and very good salaries with good medical facilities and education for their children. In order to put an end to dehumanising practice of making the *Dalits* carry night soil on their heads, all towns and cities should have flush toilets, and handcarts to carry the garbage. Similar action should be taken with regard to other low paid professions. This will not only raise the standard of living of *Dalits* but also attract the so-called high caste people to such professions and thus the association of certain professions with certain castes will be broken.

6. Adequate financial and administrative powers should be given to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. All proposals relating to SC/ST going to the cabinet for their decision should be whetted by this commission so that the cabinet is not misled by the high caste dominated bureaucracy by giving controvertible and refutable facts/arguments.

The *Dalits* cannot get enough power in their own hands unless they overthrow the power of the capitalists and landlords

and their supporting upper caste intelligentsia and establish a government of industrial workers and landless agricultural labourers. For this they have to seek political co-operation from other backward communities and minorities (who also suffer under the rule of high castes) with a manifesto containing common minimum programme of action in economic, political and social field. Only their own government can have the power and the courage to give economic and political power to the *Dalits* and to remove their social disabilities. Caste oppression is a social oppression, a survival of medievalism, barbarism, serfdom and feudalism. All this has to go before India can be a fully democratic society.

This brings us to the idea of welfare state. It is a million dollar question as to why the low caste people, who have been proletariat for thousands of years, have not taken to socialist ideology. The reason is again caste system. Most of the communist party leaders hail from high castes and do not like to work amongst the low caste people lest they lose their contacts with their own castes. They feel, of course mistakenly, that to arouse caste feeling is to deaden the class struggle. They minimise the importance of caste struggle in the Indian context forgetting that caste divides the working class too. Even industrial workers can be divided on caste basis by the unscrupulous caste leaders and thus become a cause for the failure of the strike call. The leftist leaders have therefore to realize the importance of caste and support the struggle against the Caste System along with struggle for higher wages. They have to recollect that the Russian Revolution was not only against the Kulaks but also against the church. So the ideology of *Brahminism* has to be fought along with the class war. On their part, the *Dalits* have also to appreciate that any shift to the left in the Government policies is going to benefit them most, with absolutely no loss, financial, political or social or religious. They are the proletariat of India and have nothing to lose except their chains in any radical change to the left.

Each *Dalit* individual, male or female, should aspire to get maximum of education, especially professional and

technical, have a humanistic and rational philosophy of life, give up personal bad habits like laziness and drinking and costly but useless social customs, learn to fight for personal rights and personal dignity, whatever the cost, save money and create personal assets like good dwelling places and productive equipments. They have to produce as many Ambedkars as possible and put into practice his slogan 'educate, agitate and organize'. They should help themselves before expecting help from others. India has to go through a cultural and technical revolution and *Dalits* should not be left behind as in the past upheavals. Just look at the *Ramgarhia* community of the Punjab. From petty village carpenters and blacksmiths having the same standard of living as the *Chamars* and having the same subordinate economic relationship with the landed community of agriculturists till the beginning of the 20th century, they have now risen to be big building contractors and factory owners and are having more per capita income than even the land owners. The *Nadars* of Tamil Nadu and *Ezahvas* of Kerala are other examples of rapid rise in social and economic fields, which needs to be copied by the *Dalits*.

These days, the *Dalit* leaders are giving too much importance to state and central elections and do not conduct any grass-root struggle or movement for equality and against exploitation. It is not that political power is not important but it should not be considered as the only aim of *Dalit* awakening. The Hindus have stopped talking of temple entry for Untouchables. Those *Dalits* who still believe in Hinduism should visit Hindu temples and fight the resistance of caste Hindus to it. Why the struggle for use of public tanks and ponds by the Untouchables cannot be started again? There should be struggle for common cemeteries in the villages.

If any restaurant or tea stall practices untouchability or any other institution discriminates on caste basis, there should be public 'sit-down strikes' against them. If some caste/family is still exploited in religious ceremonies like the pulling of carts in processions or for digging graves etc., there should be social

pressure on them to refuse such services. We do not hear of struggle for fair wages to landless agricultural labour in spite of high inflation. The landless should form their own unions at village level, at block level and at state level. They should not leave the leadership of these unions exclusively to high caste politicians who generally exploit them for their own political purposes. These unions should ask for land, as did the *Adivasi Dalit* Action Council of Kerala. There are no mass hunger strikes against police inaction on F.I.R (First Information Reports) about atrocities on *Dalits*. All these struggles will show on daily basis who are the friends and who the enemies of the Dalit cause are.

The Parliament of India and Legislatures of all the Hindu dominated states should pass resolutions showing remorse over the treatment meted out to the *Shudras*, untouchables and outcastes for the past thousands of years. They should also pass laws under which families who can prove injustice done to them in recent times by way of expropriation of land/hutments by high caste people, exploitation as bonded labour, exploitation of women and children, can claim compensation.

Today there are about 150 million untouchables and about 80 million aborigines in India. The aborigines have their own areas (apart from the states in Far East India) where they are in the majority. All such areas, (however small) should be carved out as separate states for them (as has been done recently by setting up Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh State in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh respectively) so that these people can take their affairs into their own hands so far as allowed by the Constitution of India. Such new areas will be bigger than Pondicherry and Goa that are continuing as regular states, though small. Unfortunately the untouchables are not having a majority in any area.

Another alternative for the Untouchables for the time being to escape the rigours of caste system is to migrate to big cities. Rigidity of caste system is more in villages than in cities

where people have more anonymity and more chances for education and to go in for modern trades and jobs, which are not caste related.

Globalization and privatization are very much in the news in India today. Government undertakings are being privatized and multinationals are entering India's economy in a big way to exploit India's cheap labour and its raw materials for their own benefits. While the high castes may benefit from these two trends, the *Dalits* will be hit hard. Privatization means less governmental developmental work and less employment under government where *Dalits* have some quota of jobs reserved for them. Private companies and foreign multinationals will not observe these rules. Labour force also comes from the *Dalits* who will be exploited for higher profits. So the workers will need special safeguards under globalization and privatization.

The issue of oppressive and degrading caste system should be taken up at UN level so that international community is able to watch what the caste hierarchy means to the *Dalits* and how far the laws made by the government to ameliorate the condition of the *Dalits* and to ease rigours of caste are sincere and effective, and how far these laws are implemented by the authorities concerned. The International Human Rights Commission also needs to be involved in view of the tenacity of the high caste Hindus in denying the *Dalits* their elementary Human Rights. In fact the aid poured into India through the World Bank and the IMF should be linked to the response of the government of India to this issue. All this will put to shame the governing cliques in India and also encourage the *Dalits* to stand up for their legitimate rights. The Government of India and the *Dalits* lost a good opportunity at the World Conference Against Race-ism held at Durban in 2001. The struggle on these line should continue.

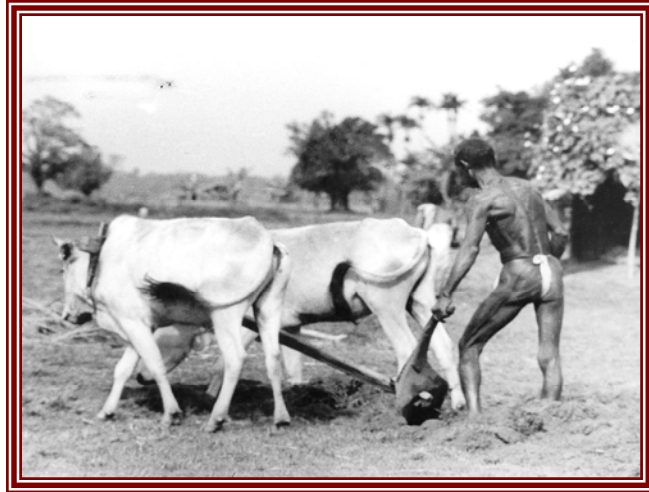
Unless the government of India and the people in general agree to make comprehensive laws of the type suggested above under various headings and implement them sincerely,

caste cannot be killed. At the most, with democracy and with economic advancement and progress in education and technology, caste system as an institution may lose its force in the classical sense of the term, but different castes will continue to exist as people will remain attached to their castes for emotional reasons and on account of differences in the economic position, cultural differences and social status based on tradition. The gap between the 'ex-untouchables' and others will remain.

This last position is not acceptable to the ex-untouchables. Caste system in its classical sense is already inoperative so far as the three higher castes are concerned. They inter-dine and tolerate even inert-caste marriages amongst themselves. No individual suffers from any handicap so far as these three castes are concerned. Even *Vaishya* castes are now producing spiritual *gurus* (a preserve of the *Brahmins*) and *Brahmins* are now working as salesmen (an occupation of the *Vaishyas*.) The trouble is only between Caste-India and *Dalit*-India with impregnable wall of untouchability standing between them. That is why no caste other than untouchable castes, is demanding abolition of castes.

Unless the three higher castes stand for destruction of caste system, it will not go whatever the untouchables may say or do. The caste Hindus do not suffer on account of caste system (in fact they benefit by it) and hence they will not fight for its abolition.

All their religious books like *Vedas*, *Gita*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabhart*a etc. preach caste system. How can they act so as to prove their holy books to be wrong? Untouchables have, therefore, to act on their own and in their own interest. Their struggle has to be long drawn and on various fronts, individual as well as collective, in the streets of villages and on national scale. Can they ever put up a united struggle, caste-ridden as they themselves are?



NAXALBARI (by Dr. Hari Sharma)

It is time to start again.
 'Cause it rained.
 Not a lot. But the earth is soft.
 More, for sure, will come.
 For now, soil must turn.
 The cycle must churn.
 It is my land. And it isn't.
 It is mine because I work on it.
 Plough it. Seed it. Nurse it.
 Know every bit of it.
 Have done so all my life.
 My father, too.
 And his father.
 It is not land. It is *Ma*.
Dharti Ma. Eternal *Ma*.
 Mother Earth.
 Bountiful. Kind. Generous.
 Season after season.
 Year after year.
 It gives us all what we need.
 It is all what we seek.
 'Cause this land is NOT mine.
 'Cause I do not get all what it gives.
 The mother gives.
 As reward for my labour. Our labour.
 The landlord takes much of it away.
 As rent. As interest for the money
 his father gave my father.

He does not labour.
 He only owns my land.
 Many people's land.

 All that we changed.
 We rose.
 Thousands upon thousands of us.
 Together.
 With bows and arrows. Spears. Guns.
 They ran away. The landlords.
 The money-lenders. The State.
 We became *Naxalbari*.
 And the land, this land,
 was all mine.

But they came back.
 Something went wrong.
 Army. Police. Tanks. Flames.
 Our leaders in jail.
 Our brothers and sisters,
 Our neighbours, slain.
 There will be time to start again.
 To take it over. No more rent.
 No more interest.
 In the meantime,
 it is time to plough the land.
 My land.
 Our land.

PART - II

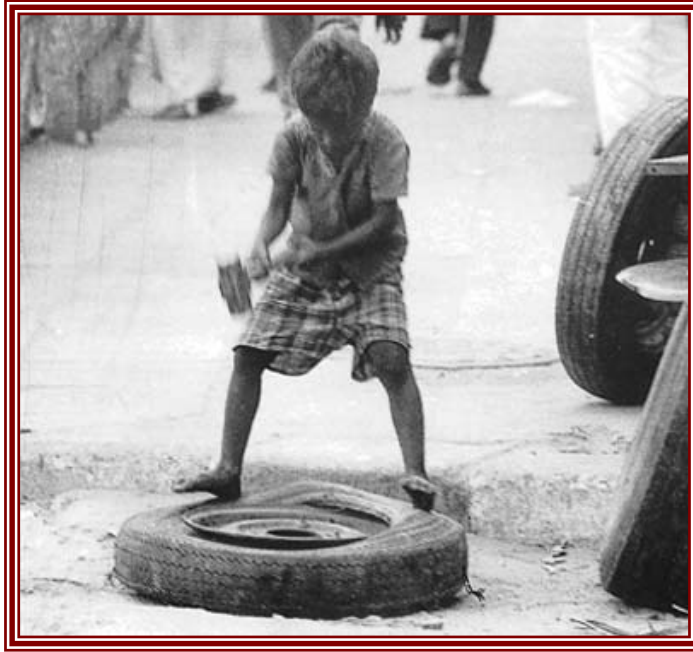
**DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR'S
MAIN ADDRESS ON
'ANNIHILATION OF CASTE'**

AND

**'ARGUMENTS AND COUNTER
ARGUMENTS'
BETWEEN
DR. AMBEDKAR AND Mr. Gandhi.**

WITH

**'COMMENTARY IN THE FORM OF
FOOT NOTES.'**



Chennai (Madras), Tamil Nadu.

‘THE WHEELS’ (By Dr. Hari Sharma)

Be patient.
 A few more blows and it'll be done.
 This wheel.
 We'll then fill it up. With air.
 We'll put it together.
 And it'll move you.
 Your vehicle. Fast.
 As fast as you make it.
 Yes, I fix wheels.
 Day in, day out, every day.
 So the wheels keep moving.
 You keep moving.
 HISTORY keeps moving.
 But you still can't move as fast as I do.
 History cannot move as fast as I do.
 For each year,
 you have to live through
 all its months.
 For each month,
 you have to live through
 all its days.

For each day,
 all its hours.
 And each minute of the hour
 Every second of the minute.
 You have to live through all of it.
 I SKIP WHOLE EPOCHS.
 Epochs of my life.
 Like my childhood.
 The books, the slates, the kites, the fights,
 The marbles, the smiles, the butterflies.
 The cuddles of mama, and the
 strokes of papa.
 And in some years when I will be young,
 I will be old.
 I will have skipped one more epoch.
 My youth.
 No, you cannot move as fast as I do.
 History cannot move as fast as I do.

 I fix your wheels.
 WHO HAS FIXED MINE?



Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

ANNIHILATION OF CASTE

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The speech prepared by me for the '*Jat-pat-Torak Mandal*' of Lahore has had an astonishingly warm reception from the Hindu public for whom it was primarily intended. The English edition of one thousand five hundred was exhausted within two months of its publication. It is translated into Gujarati and Tamil. It is being translated into Marathi, Hindi, Punjabi and Malayalam. The Demand for the English text still continues unabated. To satisfy this demand it has become necessary to issue a Second Edition. Considerations of history and effectiveness of appeal have led me to retain the original form of the essay - namely the speech form - although I was asked to recast it in the form of a direct narrative. To this edition I have added two appendices. I have collected in Appendix I the two articles written by Mr. Gandhi by the way of review of my speech in *The 'Harijan'*, and his letter to Mr. Sant Ram, a member of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal*. In Appendix II, I have printed my views in reply to the articles of Mr. Gandhi collected in Appendix I. Besides Mr. Gandhi many others have adversely criticized my views as expressed in my speech. But I have felt that in taking notice of such adverse comments I should limit myself to Mr. Gandhi. This I have done not because what he has said is so weighty as to deserve a reply but because to many a Hindu he is an oracle, so great that when he opens his lips it is expected that the argument must close and no dog must bark. But the world owes much to rebels who would dare to argue in the face of the pontiff and insist that he is not infallible. I do not care for the credit, which every progressive society must give to its rebels. I shall be satisfied if I make the Hindus realize that they are the sick men of India and that their sickness is causing danger to the health and happiness of other Indians.

B. R. Ambedkar

**PREFACE
TO ARTICLE IV
THE THIRD EDITION**

The second edition of this Essay appeared in 1937, and was exhausted within a very short period. A new edition has been in demand for a long time. It was my intention to recast the essay so as to incorporate into it another essay of mine called "Castes in India, their Origin and their Mechanism," which appeared in the issue of the Indian Antiquary Journal for May 1917. But as I could not find time, and as there is very little prospect of my being able to do so and the demand for it from the public is very insistent, I am content to let this be a mere reprint of the Second edition.

I am glad to find that this essay has become so popular, and I hope that it will serve the purpose for which it was intended.

22, Prithwiraj Road,
New Delhi,
1st December, 1944.

B. R. Ambedkar

PROLOGUE

On December 12, 1935, I received the following letter from Mr. Sant Ram, the Secretary of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal*:

My dear Doctor Sahib,

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 5 December. I have released it for press without your permission for which I beg your pardon, as I saw no harm in giving it publicity. You are a great thinker, and it is my well-considered opinion that none else has studied the problem of Caste so deeply as you have. Our *Mandal* and I have always benefited from your ideas. I have explained and preached it in the *Kranti* many times and I have even lectured on it in many Conferences. I am now very

anxious to read the exposition of your new formula - "Its is not possible to break Caste without annihilating the religious notions on which it, the Caste System, is founded." Please do explain it at length at your earliest convenience, so that we may take up the idea and emphasize it from press and platform. At present, it is not fully clear to me. -----.

Our Executive Committee persists in having you as our President for our Annual Conference. We can change our dates to accommodate your convince. Independent *Harijans*¹ of Punjab are very much desirous to meet you and discuss with you their plans. So if you kindly accept our request and come to Lahore to preside over the Conference it will serve double purpose. We will invite *Harijan* leaders of all shades of opinion and you will get an opportunity of giving your ideas to them. ---.

The *Mandal* has deputed our Assistant Secretary, Mr. Indra Singh, to meet you at Bombay in Xmas and discuss with you the whole situation with a view to persuade you to please accept our request.

Sant Ram,
Secretary,
Jat-Pat- Torak- Mandal.

The *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal*, I was given to understand, to be an organization of Caste Hindu Social Reformers, with the one and only aim, namely to eradicate the Caste System from amongst the Hindus. As a rule, I do not like to take any part in a movement that is carried on by the Caste Hindus. Their attitude towards social reform is so different from mine that I have found it difficult to pull on with them. Indeed, I find their company quite uncongenial to me on account of our differences of opinion. Therefore, when the *Mandal* first approached me I declined their invitation to preside. The *Mandal*, however, would not take a refusal from me and sent down one of its members to Bombay to press me to accept the invitation. In the end I agreed to preside. The Annual Conference was to be held at Lahore, the headquarters of the *Mandal*. The Conference was to meet in

Easter but was subsequently postponed to the middle of May 1936. The Reception Committee of the *Mandal* has now cancelled the Conference. The notice of cancellation came long after my presidential address had been printed. The copies of this address are now lying with me. As I did not get an opportunity to deliver the address from the presidential chair, the public has not had an opportunity to know my views on the problems created by the Caste System. To let the public know them and also to dispose of the printed copies that are lying with me, I have decided to put the printed copies of the address in the market. The accompanying pages contain the text of that address.

The public will be curious to know what led to the cancellation of my appointment as the President of the Conference. At the start, a dispute arose over the printing of the address. I desired that the address should be printed in Bombay. The *Mandal* wished that it should be printed in Lahore on the ground of economy. I did not agree and insisted upon having it printed in Bombay. Instead of agreeing to my proposition I received a letter signed by several members of the *Mandal* from which I give the following extract:

B. R. Ambedkar
27-3-1936

Revered Dr. Ji,

"Your letter of the 24th instant addressed to Mr. Sant Ram has been shown to us. We were a little disappointed to read it. Perhaps you are not fully aware of the situation that has arisen here. Almost all the Hindus in the Punjab are against your being invited to this province. The *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* has been subjected to the bitterest criticism and has received censorious rebuke from all quarters. All the Hindu leaders among whom being Bhai Parmanand, M.L.A. (Ex-President, Hindu Maha Sabha), Mahatma Hans Raj, Dr. Gokal Chand Narang, Minister of Local Self-Government, Raja Narendra Nath, M.L.C. etc., have disassociated them from this step of the *Mandal*.

Despite all this the runners of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal*

(the leading figure being Mr. Sant Ram) are determined to wade through thick and thin but would not give up the idea of your president-ship. The *Mandal* has earned a bad name....."

"Under the circumstances it becomes your duty to co-operate with the *Mandal*. On the one hand, the Hindus are putting them to so much trouble and hardship and if on the other hand you too augment their difficulties it will be a most sad coincidence of bad luck for them. We hope you will think over the matter and do what is good for us all."

This letter puzzled me greatly. I could not understand why the *Mandal* should displease me for the sake of a few rupees in the matter of printing the address. Secondly, I could not believe that men like Sir Gokal Chand Narang had really resigned as a protest against my selection as President because I had received the following letter from Sir Gokal Chand himself:

B. R. Ambedkar

5 Montgomery Road,
Lahore,
7-2-1936

Dear Dr. Ambedkar,

I am glad to learn from the workers of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* that you have agreed to preside at their next anniversary to be held at Lahore during the Easter holidays. It will give me much pleasure if you stay with me while you are at Lahore. More when we meet.

Yours sincerely,
G. C. Narang

Whatever is the truth I did not yield to this pressure. But even when the *Mandal* found that I was insisting upon having my address printed in Bombay instead of agreeing to my proposal, the *Mandal* sent me a wire that they were sending Mr.

Har Bhagwan to Bombay to "talk over matters personally." Mr. Har Bhagwan came to Bombay on the 9th of April. When I met Mr. Har Bhagwan I found that he had nothing to say regarding the issue. Indeed, he was so unconcerned regarding the printing of the address, whether it should be printed in Bombay or Lahore, that he did not even mention it in the course of our conversation. All that he was anxious for was to know the contents of the address. I was then convinced that in getting the address printed in Lahore the main object of the *Mandal* was not to save money but to get at the contents of the address. I gave him a copy. He did not feel very happy with some parts of it. He returned to Lahore. From Lahore, he wrote to me the following letter:

Lahore, April 14, 1936

My dear Doctor Sahib,

Since my arrival from Bombay, on the 12th, I have been indisposed owing to my having not slept continuously for 5 or 6 nights, which were spent in the train. Reaching here I came to know that you had come to Amritsar. I would have seen you there if I were well enough to go about. I have handed over your address to Mr. Sant Ram for translation and he has liked it very much, but he is not sure whether he could translate it for printing before the 25th. In any case, it would have a wide publicity and we are sure it would wake the Hindus up from their slumber.

The passage I pointed out to you at Bombay has been read by some of our friends with a little misgiving, and those of us who would like to see the Conference terminate without any untoward incident would prefer that at least the word "Veda" be left out for the time being. I leave this to your good sense. I hope, however, in your concluding paragraph you will make it clear that the views expressed in the address are your own and the responsibility does not lay on the *Mandal*. I hope, you will not mind this statement of mine and would let us have 1,000 copies of the address, for which we shall, of course, pay. To this effect I have sent you a telegram today. A cheque of Rs. 100 is enclosed herewith which kindly acknowledge, and send us your

bills in due time.

I have called a meeting of the Reception Committee and shall communicate their decision to you immediately. In the mean time kindly accept my heartfelt thanks for your kindness and the great pains taken by you in the preparation of your address. You have really put us under a heavy debt of gratitude.

Yours Sincerely,

Har Bhagwan

P.S. - Kindly send me the copies of the address by passenger train as soon as it is printed, so that copies may be sent to the Press for publication.

Accordingly I handed over my manuscript to the printer with an order to print 1,000 copies. Eight days later, I received another letter from Mr. Har Bhagwan, which I reproduce below:

B. R. Ambedkar

Lahore,
22-4-1936

Dear Dr. Ambedkar,

We are in receipt of your telegram and letter, for which kindly accept our thanks. In accordance with your desire, we have again postponed our Conference, but feel that it would have been much better to have it on the 25th and 26th, as the weather is growing warmer and warmer every day in the Punjab. In the middle of May it would be fairly hot, and the sittings in the daytime would not be very pleasant and comfortable. However, we shall try our best to do all we can to make things as comfortable as possible, if it is held in the middle of May.

There is, however, one thing that we have been compelled to bring to your kind attention. You will remember that when I pointed out to you the misgivings entertained by some of our people regarding your declaration on the subject of change of religion, you told me that it was undoubtedly outside the scope of the *Mandal* and that you had no intention to say anything from our platform in that connection. At the same time

when the manuscript of your address was handed to me you assured me that that was the main portion of your address and that there were only two or three concluding paragraphs that you wanted to add. On receipt of the second instalment of your address we have been taken by surprise, as that would make it so lengthy, that we are afraid, very few people would read the whole of it. Besides that you have more than once stated in your address that you had decided to walk out of the fold of the Hindus and that that was your last address as a Hindu. You have also unnecessarily attacked the morality and reasonableness of the Vedas and other religious books of the Hindus, and have at length dwelt upon the technical side of Hindu religion, which has absolutely no connection with the problem at issue, so much so that some of the passages have become irrelevant and off the point. We would have been very pleased if you had confined your address to that portion given to me, or if an addition were necessary, it would have been limited to what you had written on Brahmanism etc. The last portion that deals with the complete annihilation of Hindu religion and doubts the morality of the sacred books of the Hindus as well as a hint about your intention to leave the Hindu fold does not seem to me to be relevant.

I would therefore most humbly request you on behalf of the people responsible for the Conference to leave out the passages referred to above, and close the address with what was given to me or add a few paragraphs on Brahmanism². We doubt the wisdom of making the address unnecessarily provocative and pinching³. There are several of us who subscribe to your feelings and would very much want to be under your banner for remodelling of the Hindu religion. If you had decided to get together persons of your cult I can assure you a large number would have joined your army of reformers from the Punjab.

In fact, we thought you would give us a lead in the destruction of the evil of Caste System, especially when you have studied the subject so thoroughly, and strengthen our hands by bringing about a revolution and making yourself as a nucleus in the gigantic effort, but declaration of the nature made by you, when repeated loses its power, and becomes a hackneyed term.

Under the circumstances, I would request you to consider the whole matter and make your address more effective by saying that you would be glad to take a leading part in the destruction of the Caste System if the Hindus are willing to work in right earnest toward that end, even if they had to forsake their kith and kin and the religious notions. In case you do so, I am sanguine that you would find a ready response from the Punjab in such an endeavour.

I shall be grateful if you will help us at this juncture as we have already undergone much expenditure and have been put to suspense, and let us know by the return post that you have condescended to limit your address as above. In case, you still insist upon the printing of the address in *toto*, we very much regret it would not be possible - rather advisable for us to hold the Conference, and would prefer to postpone it sine die, although by doing so we shall be losing the goodwill of the people because of the repeated postponements. We should, however, like to point out that you have carved a niche in our hearts by writing such a wonderful treatise on the Caste System, which excels all other treatises so far written and will prove to be a valuable heritage, so to say. We shall be ever indebted to you for the pains taken by you in its preparation.

Thanking you very much for your kindness and with best wishes.

I am yours sincerely,
Har Bhagwan

To this letter I sent the following reply:

April 27, 1936

Dear Mr. Har Bhagwan,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd April. I note with regret that the Reception Committee of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* "would prefer to postpone the Conference sine die" if I insisted upon printing the address in *toto*. In reply I have to inform you that I also would prefer to have the Conference cancelled - I do not like to use vague terms - if the *Mandal*

insisted upon having my address pruned to suit its circumstances. You may not like my decision. But I cannot give up, for the sake of the honour of presiding over the Conference, the liberty that every President must have in the preparation of the address. I cannot give up for the sake of pleasing the *Mandal* the duty which every President owes to the Conference over which he presides to give it a lead which he thinks right and proper. The issue is one of principle and I feel I must do nothing to compromise it in any way.

I would not have entered into any controversy as regards the priority of the decision taken by the Reception Committee. But as you have given certain reasons that appear to throw the blame on me I am bound to answer them. In the first place, I must dispel the notion that the views contained in part of the address objectionable to the Committee have come to the *Mandal* as a surprise. Mr. Sant Ram, I am sure, will bear me out when I say that in reply to one of his letters I had said that the real method of breaking up the Caste System was not only to bring about inter-caste dinners and inter-caste marriages but to destroy the religious notions on which Caste was founded and that Mr. Sant Ram in return asked me to explain what he said was novel point of view. It was in response to this invitation from Mr. Sant Ram that I thought I ought to elaborate in my address what I had stated in a sentence in my letter to him. You cannot, therefore, say that the views expressed are new. At any rate, they are not new to Mr. Sant Ram who is the moving spirit and the leading light of your *Mandal*. But I go further and say that I wrote this part of my address not merely because I felt it desirable to do so. I wrote it because I thought that it was absolutely necessary to complete the argument. I am amazed to read that you characterize the portion of the speech to which your Committee objects as "irrelevant and off the point." You will allow me to say that I am a lawyer and I know the rules of relevancy as well as any member of your Committee. I most emphatically maintain that the portion objected to is not only most relevant but is also important. It is in that part of the address that I have discussed the ways and means of breaking up

the Caste System. It may be that the conclusion I have arrived at as to the best method of destroying Caste is startling and painful. You are entitled to say that my analysis is wrong. But you cannot say that in an address that deals with the problem of Caste it is not open to me to discuss how Caste can be destroyed.

Your other complaint relates to the length of the address. I have pleaded guilty to the charge in the address itself. But, who is really responsible for this? I fear you have come rather late on the scene. Otherwise you would have known that originally I had planned to write a short address for my own convenience, as I had neither the time nor the energy to engage myself in the preparation of an elaborate thesis.

It was the *Mandal* who asked me to deal with the subject exhaustively and it was the *Mandal* which sent down to me a list of questions relating to the Caste System and asked me to answer them in the body of my address as they were questions which were often raised in the controversy between the *Mandal* and its opponents and which the *Mandal* found difficult to answer satisfactorily. It was in trying to meet the wishes of the *Mandal* in this respect that the address has grown to the length to which it has. In view of what I have said I am sure you will agree that the fault respecting length of the address is not mine.

I did not expect that your *Mandal* would be so upset because I have spoken of the destruction of Hindu Religion. I thought it was only fools who were afraid of words. But lest there should be any misapprehensions in the minds of the people I have taken great pains to explain what I mean by religion and destruction of religion. I am sure that nobody on reading my address could possibly misunderstand me. That your *Mandal* should have taken a fright at mere words as "destruction of religion etc.," notwithstanding the explanation that accompanies them does not raise the *Mandal* in my estimation. One cannot have any respect or regard for men who take the position of the Reformers and then refuse even to see the logical consequences of that position, let alone following them out in action.

You will agree that I have never accepted to be limited in any way in the preparation of my address and the question as

to what the address should or should not contain was never even discussed between the *Mandal* and myself. I had always taken for granted that I was free to express in the address such views as I held on the subject. Indeed until, you came to Bombay on the 9th April the *Mandal* did not know what sort of an address I was preparing. It was when you came to Bombay that I voluntarily told you that I had no desire to use your platform from which to advocate my views regarding change of religion by the Depressed Classes. I think I have scrupulously kept that promise in the preparation of the address. Beyond a passing reference of an indirect character where I say that "I am sorry I will not be here....etc." I have said nothing about the subject in my address. When I see you object even to such a passing and so indirect a reference, I feel bound to ask, did you think that in agreeing to preside over your Conference I would be agreeing to suspend or to give up my views regarding change of faith by the Depressed Classes? If you did think so I must tell you that I am in no way responsible for such a mistake on your part. If any of you had even hinted to me that in exchange for the honour you were doing to me by electing as President, I was to abjure my faith in my programme of conversion, I would have told you in quite plain terms that I cared more for my faith than for any honour from you⁴.

After your letter of the 14th, this letter of yours comes as a surprise to me. I am sure that any one who reads it will feel the same. I cannot account for this sudden *volte face* on the part of the Reception Committee. There is no difference in substance between the rough draft that was before the Committee when you wrote your letter of the 14th and the final draft on which the decision of the Committee communicated to me in your letter under reply was taken. You cannot point out a single idea in the final draft that is not contained in the earlier draft. The ideas are the same. The only difference is that they have been worked out in greater detail in the final draft. If there was anything to object to in the address you could have said so on the 14th. But you did not. On the contrary you asked me to print off 1,000 copies leaving me the liberty to accept or not the verbal changes that

you suggested. Accordingly I got 1,000 copies printed, which are now lying with me. Eight days later you write to say that you object to the address and that if it is not amended the Conference will be cancelled. You ought to have known that there was no hope of any alteration being made in the address. I told you when you were in Bombay that I would not alter a comma, that I would not allow any censorship over my address and that you would have to accept the address as it came from me. I also told you that the responsibility for the views expressed in the address was entirely mine and if they were not liked by the Conference I would not mind at all if the Conference passed a resolution condemning them. So anxious was I to relieve your *Mandal* from having to assume responsibility for my views and also the object of not getting entangled by too intimate an association with your Conference, I suggested to you that I desired to have my address treated as a sort of an inaugural address and not as a Presidential address and that the *Mandal* should find some one else to preside over the Conference, and deal with the resolutions. Nobody could have been better placed to take a decision on the 14th than your Committee. The Committee failed to do that and in the meantime cost of printing has been incurred which, I am sure, with a little more firmness on the part of your Committee, could have been saved.

I feel sure that the views expressed in my address have little to do with the decision of your Committee. I have reasons to believe that my presence at the Sikh *Prachar* Conference held at Amritsar has had a good deal to do with the decision of the Committee⁵. Nothing else can satisfactorily explain the sudden *volte face* shown by the Committee between the 14th and the 22nd April. I must not however prolong this controversy and must request you to announce immediately that the Session of the Conference, which was to meet under my President-ship, is cancelled. All the grace has now run out and I shall not consent to preside even if your Committee agreed to accept my address as it is in *toto*. I thank you for your appreciation of the pains I have taken in the preparation of the address. I certainly have profited by the labour if no one else does. My only regret is that I

was put to such hard labour at a time when my health was not equal to the strain it has caused.

Yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

This correspondence will disclose the reasons, which have led to the cancellation by the *Mandal* of my appointment, as President and the reader will be in a position to lay the blame where it ought properly to belong. This is I believe the first time when the appointment of a President is cancelled by the Reception Committee because it does not approve of the views of the President. But whether that is so or not, this is certainly the first time in my life to have been invited to preside over a Conference of Caste Hindus. I am sorry that it has ended in a tragedy. But what can any one expect from a relationship so tragic as the relationship between the reforming sect of Caste Hindus and the self-respecting sect of Untouchables where the former have no desire to alienate their orthodox fellows and the latter have no alternative but to insist upon reform being carried out?

B. R. Ambedkar

Rajagriha,
Dadar, Bombay-14
May 5, 1936

continued.....

SPEECH PREPARED

BY

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

FOR

**The 1936 Annual Conference of the
Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal
Of Lahore**

BUT

NOT DELIVERED

**Owing to the cancellation of the conference by the Reception
Committee on the ground that the views expressed in the
speech would be unbearable to the Conference.**

Friends,

I am really sorry for the members of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* who have so very kindly invited me to preside over this Conference. I am sure they will be asked many questions for having me as the President. The *Mandal*¹ will be asked to explain as to why it has imported a man from Bombay to preside over a function to be held in Lahore. I believe the *Mandal* could easily have found some one better qualified than myself to preside on the occasion. I have criticized the Hindus. I have questioned the authority of the Mahatma (Gandhi) whom they revere. They hate me. To them I am a snake in their garden. The *Mandal* will no doubt be asked by the politically minded Hindus to explain why it has called me to fill this place of honour. It is an act of great daring. I shall not be surprised if some political Hindus regard it as an insult. This selection of mine cannot certainly please the ordinary religiously minded Hindu. The *Mandal* may be asked to explain why it has disobeyed the Shastric⁶ injunctions in selecting me as the President. According to the direction of the *Shastras* the Brahmin is appointed to be the Guru⁷ for the three “*Varnas*”. The *Mandal* therefore knows from whom a Hindu should take his lesson and from whom he should not. The *Shastras* do not permit a Hindu to accept any one as his Guru merely because he is well versed. This is made very clear by Ramdas, a Brahmin saint from Maharashtra, who is alleged to have inspired Shivaji⁸ to establish a Hindu *Raj*. In his *Dasbodh*, a socio-politico-religious treatise in Marathi verse, Ramdas asks, addressing the Hindus, can we accept an *Antyaja* to be our Guru because he is a *Pundit* and gives an answer in the negative⁹. What replies to give to these questions is a matter, which I must leave to the *Mandal*. The *Mandal* knows best the reasons which led it to travel to Bombay to select a president, to fix upon a man so repugnant to the Hindus and to descend so low in the scale as to select an *Antyaja*, an Untouchable to address an audience of the *Savarnas*. As for myself you will allow me to say that I have accepted the invitation much against my will and also against the will of many of my fellow untouchables. I know that the Hindus

are sick of me. I know that I am not a *persona grata* with them. Knowing all this I have deliberately kept myself away from them. I have no desire to inflict myself upon them. I have been giving expression to my views from my own platform. This has already caused a great deal of heartburning and irritation. I have no desire to ascend the platform of the Hindus to do within their sight what I have been doing within their hearing. If I am here it is because of your choice and not because of my wish. Yours is a cause of social reform. That cause has always made an appeal to me and because of that I felt I ought not to refuse an opportunity of helping the cause especially when you think that I can help it. Whether what I am going to say today will help you in any way to solve the problem you are grappling with is for you to judge. All I hope to do is to place before you my views on the problem.

II

The path of social reform like the path to haven at any rate in India is strewn with many difficulties¹⁰. Social reform in India has few friends and many critics. The critics fall into two distinct classes. One class consists of political reformers and the other of the socialists.

It was at one time recognized that without social efficiency no permanent progress in the other fields of activity was possible, that owing to mischief wrought by the evil customs, Hindu Society was not in a state of efficiency and that ceaseless efforts must be made to eradicate these evils. It was due to the recognition of this fact that the birth of the National Congress was accompanied by the foundation of the Social Conference. While the Congress was concerned with defining the weak points in the political organization of the country, the Social Conference was engaged in removing the weak points in the social organization of the Hindu Society. For some time the Congress and the Conference worked as two wings of one common activity and they held their annual sessions in the same *pandal*. But soon the two wings developed into two parties, a Political Reform Party and a Social Reform Party, between

whom there raged a fierce controversy. The Political Reform Party supported the National Congress and Social Reform Party supported the Social Conference. The two bodies thus became two hostile camps. The point at issue was whether social reform should precede political reform. For a decade the forces were evenly balanced and the battle was fought without victory to either side. It was however evident that the fortunes of the Social Conference were ebbing fast. The gentlemen who presided over the sessions of the Social Conference lamented that the majority of the educated Hindus were for political advancement and indifferent to social reform and while the number of those who attended the Congress was large and the number who did not attend but who sympathized with it even larger, the number of those who attended the Social Conference was very much smaller. This indifference, this thinning of its ranks, was soon followed by active hostility from the politicians. Under the leadership of the late Mr. Tilak¹¹, the courtesy with which the Congress allowed the Social Conference the use of its *Pandal*, was withdrawn and the spirit of enmity went to a pitch that when the Social Conference desired to erect its own *pandal* a threat to burn the *pandal* was held out by its opponents. Thus in the course of time the party in favour of political reform won and the Social Conference vanished and was forgotten. The speech delivered by Mr. W. C. Bannerji in 1892 at Allahabad as President of the eighth session of the Congress, sounds like a funeral oration at the death of the Social Conference and is so typical of the Congress attitude that I venture to quote from it the following extract. Mr. Bannerji said:

"I for one have no patience with those who say we shall not be fit for political reform until we reform our social system. I fail to see any connection between the two...Are we not fit for political reform, (a) because our widows remain unmarried and our girls are given in marriage earlier than in other countries, (b) because our wives and daughters do not drive about with us visiting our friends, (c) because we do not send our daughters to Oxford and Cambridge?" (Cheers)¹².

I have stated the case for political reform as put by Mr. Bannerji. There were many who were happy that the victory went to the Congress. But those who believe in the importance of social reform may ask, is the argument such as that of Mr. Bannerji final? Does it prove that the victory went to those who were in the right? Does it prove conclusively that social reform has no bearing on political reform? It will help us to understand the matter if I state the other side of the case. I will draw upon the treatment of the untouchables for my facts.

Under the rule of the *Peshwas* in the Maratha country the untouchable was not allowed to use the public streets if a Hindu was coming along lest he should pollute the Hindu by his shadow. The untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or in his neck as sign or a mark to prevent the Hindu from getting them polluted by his touch through mistake. In Poona, the capital of the *Peshwas*, the untouchable was required to carry, strung from his waist, a broom to sweep away from behind the dust he treaded on lest a Hindu walking on the same should be polluted. In Poona, the untouchable was required to carry an earthen pot, hung in his neck wherever he went, for holding his spit lest his spit falling on earth should pollute a Hindu who might unknowingly happen to tread on it. Let me take more recent facts. The tyranny practiced by the Hindus upon the Balais, an untouchable community in Central India, will serve my purpose. You will find a report of this in the Times of India of 4th January 1928. The correspondent of the Times of India reported that high caste Hindus, viz. Kalotas, Rajputs and Brahmins including the Patels and Patwaris of villages of Kanaria, Bicholi-Hafsi, Bicholi-Mardana and of about 15 other villages in the Indore district informed the Balais of their respective villages that if they wished to live among them, they must conform to the following rules:

- (1). Balais must not wear gold-lace-bordered *pugrees*.
- (2). They must not wear dhoti with coloured or fancy borders.
- (3). They must convey intimation of the death of any Hindu to relatives of the deceased - no matter how far away these relatives may be living.

(4). In all Hindu marriages, Balais must play music before the processions and during the marriage.(5). Balai women must not wear gold or silver ornaments; they must not wear fancy gowns or jackets.

(6). Balai women must attend all cases of confinement of Hindu women.

(7). Balais must render services without demanding remuneration and must accept whatever a Hindu is pleased to give.

(8). If the Balais do not agree to abide by these terms they must clear out of the villages.

The Balais refused to comply; and the Hindu element proceeded against them. Balais were not allowed to get water from the village wells; they were not allowed to let go their cattle to graze. Balais were prohibited from passing through land owned by a Hindu, so that if the field of a Balai was surrounded by land owned by Hindus, the Balai could have no access to his own field. The Hindus also let their cattle graze down the fields of Balais. The Balais submitted petition to the *Darbar* against these persecutions; but as they could get no timely relief, and the oppression continued, hundreds of Balais with their wives and children were obliged to abandon their homes in which their ancestors lived for generations and to migrate to adjoining States, viz. to villages in Dhar, Dewas, Bagli, Gwalior and other States. What happened to them in their new homes may for the present be left out of our consideration.

The incident at Kavitha in Gujarat¹³ happened only last year. The Hindus of Kavitha ordered the untouchables not to insist upon sending their children to the common village school maintained by Government. What sufferings the untouchables of Kavitha had to undergo to exercise a civic right against the wishes of the Hindus is too well known to need detailed description.¹⁴

Another instance occurred in the village of Zanu located in the district of Gujarat. In November 1935 some untouchable women of well-to-do families started fetching water in metal pots. The Hindus looked upon the use of metal pots by

ntouchables as an affront to their dignity and assaulted the untouchable women for their impudence.

A most recent event is reported from the village Chakwara in Jaipur State. It seems from the reports that have appeared in the newspapers that an untouchable of Chakwara who had returned from a pilgrimage had arranged to give a dinner to his fellow untouchables of the village as an act of religious piety. The host desired to treat the guests to sumptuous meal and the item served included ghee¹⁵ also. But while the assembly of untouchables was engaged in partaking of the food, the Hindus in their hundreds, armed with *lathis*, rushed to the scene, despoiled the food and belaboured the untouchables who left the food they were served with and ran away for their lives. And why was this murderous assault committed on defenceless untouchables? The reason given is that the untouchable host was impudent enough to serve ghee and his untouchable guests were foolish enough to taste it. Ghee is undoubtedly a luxury for the rich. But no one would think that consumption of ghee was a mark of high social status. The Hindus of Chakwara thought otherwise and in righteous indignation avenged themselves for the wrong done to them by the untouchables, who insulted them by treating ghee as an item of their food which they ought to have known could not be theirs, consistently with the dignity of the Hindus. This means that an untouchable must not use ghee even if he can afford to buy it, since it is an act of arrogance towards the Hindus.¹⁶ This happened on or about the 1st of April 1936!¹⁷

Having stated the facts let me now state the case for social reform. In doing this, I will follow Mr. Bannerji, as nearly as I can and ask the political-minded Hindus "Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow a large class of your own countrymen like untouchables to use public schools?"¹⁸ Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them the use of public water-wells? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them the use of public streets? Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them to

wear what apparel or ornament they like? Are you fit for power even though you do not allow them to eat any food they like? I can ask a string of questions. But these will suffice. I wonder what would have been the reply of Mr. Bannerji. I am sure no sensible man will have the courage to give an affirmative answer. Every Congressman who repeats the dogma of Mill¹⁹ that one country is not fit to rule another country must admit that one class is not fit to rule another class.

How is it then that the Social Reform Party lost the battle? To understand this correctly it is necessary, to take note of the kind of social reform which the reformers were agitating for. In this connection it is necessary to make a distinction between social reforms in the sense of the reform of the Hindu family and social reform in the sense of the reorganization and reconstruction of the Hindu Society. The former has relation to widow remarriage, child marriage etc., while the latter relates to the abolition of the Caste System. The Social Conference was a body, which mainly concerned itself with the reform of the high caste Hindu family. It consisted mostly of enlightened high caste Hindus who did not feel the necessity for agitating for the abolition of caste or had not the courage to agitate for it. They felt quite naturally a greater urge to remove such evils as enforced widowhood, child marriage etc., evils which prevailed among them and which were personally felt by them. They did not stand up for the reform of the Hindu society. The battle that was fought centred round the question of the reform of family. It did not relate to the social reform in the sense of the break-up of the caste system. It was never put in issue by the reformers. That is the reason why the Social Reform Party lost.²⁰

I am aware that this argument cannot alter the fact that political reform did in fact gain precedence over social reform. But the argument has this much value if not more. It explains why social reformers lost the battle. It also helps us to understand how limited was the victory which the Political Reform Party obtained over the Social Reform Party and that the view that social reform need not precede political reform is a view which may stand only when by social reform is meant the

reform of the family. That political reform cannot with impunity take precedence over social reform in the sense of reconstruction of society is a thesis, which I am sure, cannot be controverted. That the makers of political constitutions must take account of social forces is a fact, which is recognized by no less a person than Ferdinand Lassalle²¹, the friend and co-worker of Karl Marx²². In addressing a Prussian²³ audience in 1862 Lassalle said:

"The constitutional questions are in the first instance not questions of right but questions of might. The actual constitution of a country has its existence only in the actual condition of force, which exists in the country: hence political constitutions have value and permanence only when they accurately express those conditions of forces which exist in practice within a society."

But it is not necessary to go to Prussia. There is evidence at home. What is the significance of the Communal Award²⁴ with its allocation of political power in defined proportions to diverse classes and communities? In my view, its significance lies in this that political constitution must take note of social organization. It shows that the politicians, who denied that the social problem in India had any bearing on the political problem, were forced to reckon with the social problem in devising the constitution. The Communal Award is, so to say, the nemesis following upon the indifference and neglect of social reform. It is a victory for the Social Reform Party which shows that though defeated they were in the right in insisting upon the importance of social reform. Many, I know, will not accept this finding. The view is current, and it is pleasant to believe in it, that the Communal Award is unnatural and that it is the result of an unholy alliance between the minorities and the bureaucracy. I do not wish to rely on the Communal Award as a piece of evidence to support my contention if it is said that it is not good evidence. Let us turn to Ireland. What does the history of Irish Home Rule show? It is well-known that in the course of the negotiations between the representatives of Ireland, Ulster and Southern Ireland, Mr. Redmond²⁵, the representatives of Ireland, in order

to bring Ulster²⁶ in a Home Rule Constitution common to the whole of Ireland said to the representatives of Ulster: "Ask any political safeguards you like and you shall have them." What was the reply that Ulstermen gave? Their reply was "Damn your safeguards, we don't want to be ruled by you on any terms." People who blame the minorities in India ought to consider what would have happened to the political aspirations of the majority if the minorities had taken the attitude, which Ulster took. Judged by the attitude of Ulster to Irish Home Rule, is it nothing that the minorities agreed to the majority rule, which has not shown much sense of statesmanship, provided some safeguards were devised for them? But this is not only incidental. The main question is why did Ulster take this attitude? The only answer I can give is that there was a social problem between Ulster and Southern Ireland-the problem between Catholics and Protestants, essentially a problem of Caste. That Home Rule in Ireland would be Rome Rule was the way in which the Ulstermen had framed their answer. But that is only another way of stating that it was the social problem of Caste between the Catholics and Protestants, which prevented the solution of the political problem. This evidence again is sure to be challenged. It will be urged that here too the hand of the Imperialist was at work. But my resources are not exhausted. I will give evidence from the History of Rome. Here no one can say that any evil genius was at work. Any one who has studied the History of Rome will know that the Republican Constitution of Rome bore marks having strong resemblance to the Communal Award. When the kingship in Rome was abolished, the kingly power or the Imperium was divided between the Consuls and the Pontifex Maximus. In the Consuls was vested the secular authority of the King, while the latter took over the religious authority of the King. This Republican Constitution had provided that, of the two Consuls one was to be Patrician²⁷ and the other Plebian²⁸. The same constitution had also provided that, of the Priests under the Pontifex Maximus, half were to be Plebians and the other half Patricians. Why is that the Republican Constitution of Rome had these provisions which, as I said, resemble so strongly the

provisions of the Communal Award? The only answer one can get is that the Constitution of Republican Rome had to take account of the social division between the Patricians and the Plebians, who formed two distinct castes. To sum up, let political reformers turn to any direction they like, they will find that in the making of a constitution, they cannot ignore the problem arising out of the prevailing social order.

The illustrations, which I have taken in support of the proposition that the social and the religious problems have a bearing on a political constitution, seem to be particular. Perhaps they are. But it should not be supposed that the bearing of the one on the other is limited. On the other hand one can say that generally speaking, History bears out the proposition that political revolutions have always been preceded by social and religious revolutions.

The religious Reformation started by Luther²⁹ was the precursor of the political emancipation of the European people. In England Puritanism³⁰ led to the establishment of political liberty. Puritanism founded the new world. It was Puritanism, which won the war of American Independence, and Puritanism was a religious movement. The same is true of the Muslim Empire. Before the Arabs became a political power they had undergone a thorough religious revolution started by the Prophet Mohammad. Even Indian History supports the same conclusion. The political revolution led by Chandragupta was preceded by the religious and social revolution of Buddha. The political revolution led by Shivaji was preceded by the religious and social reform brought about by the saints of Maharashtra. The political revolution of the Sikhs was preceded by the religious and social revolution led by Guru Nanak. It is unnecessary to add more illustrations. These will suffice to show that the emancipation of the mind and the soul is a necessary preliminary for the political expansion of the people.

III

Let me turn to the Socialists. Can the Socialists ignore the problem arising out of the social order? The Socialists of

India, following their fellows in Europe, are seeking to apply the economic interpretation of history to the facts of India. They propound that man is an economic creature, that his activities and aspirations are bound by economic facts, that property is the only source of power. They, therefore, preach that political and social reforms are but gigantic illusions and that economic reform by equalization of property must have precedence over every other kind of reform. One may join issue on every one of these premises on which rests the Socialists' case for economic reform having priority over other kind of reform. One may contend that economic motive is not the only motive by which man is actuated. That economic power is the only kind of power, no student of human society can accept. That the social status of an individual by itself often becomes a source of power and authority is made clear by the sway, which the Mahatmas have held over the common man. Why do millionaires in India obey penniless *Sadhus* and *Fakirs*? Why do millions of paupers in India sell their trifling trinkets, that constitutes their only wealth, and go to Benares and Mecca? That, religion is the source of power is illustrated by the history of India where the priest³¹ holds a sway over the common man often greater than the magistrate and where everything, even such things as strikes and elections, so easily take a religious turn and can so easily be given a religious twist. Take the case of the Plebeians of Rome as a further illustration of the power of religion over man. It throws great light on this point. The Plebs had fought for a share in the supreme executive under the Roman Republic and had secured the appointment of a Plebeian Consul elected by a separate electorate constituted by the *Comitia Centuriata*, which was an assembly of Plebeians. They wanted a Consul of their own because they felt that the Patrician Consuls used to discriminate against the Plebeians in carrying on the administration. They had apparently obtained a great gain because under the Republican Constitution of Rome one Consul had the power of vetoing an act of the other Consul. But did they in fact gain anything? The answer to this question must be in the negative. The Plebeians never could get a Plebeian Consul who

could be said to be a strong man and who could act independently of the Patrician Consul. In the ordinary course of things the Plebeians should have got a strong Plebeian Consul in view of the fact that his election was to be by a separate electorate of Plebeians. The question is why did they fail in getting a strong Plebeian to officiate as their Consul? The answer to this question reveals the dominion which religion exercises over the minds of men. It was an accepted creed of the whole Roman populous that no official could enter upon the duties of his office unless the Oracle of Delphi declared that he was acceptable to the Goddess. The priests who were in charge of the temple of the Goddess of Delphi were all Patricians. Whenever therefore the Plebeians elected a Consul who was known to be a strong party man opposed to the Patricians or "communal" to use the term that is current in India, the Oracle invariably declared that he was not acceptable to the Goddess. This is how the Plebeians were cheated out of their rights. But what is worthy of note is that the Plebeians permitted themselves to be thus cheated because they too like the Patricians, held firmly the belief that the approval of the Goddess was a condition precedent to the taking charge by an official of his duties and that election by the people was not enough. If the Plebeians had contended that election was enough and that the approval by the Goddess was not necessary, they would have derived the fullest benefit from the political right, which they had obtained. But they did not. They agreed to elect another, less suitable to themselves but more suitable to the Goddess which in fact meant more amenable to the Patricians. Rather than give up religion, the Plebeians gave up material gain for which they had fought so hard. Does this not show that religion can be a source of power as great as money if not greater? The fallacy of the Socialists lies in supposing that because in the present stage of European Society property as a source of power is predominant, that the same is true of India or that the same was true of Europe in the past. Religion, social status and property are all sources of power and authority, which one man has, to control the liberty of another. One is predominant at one stage; the other is predominant at another

stage. That is the only difference. If liberty is the ideal, if liberty means the destruction of the dominion which one man holds over another, then obviously it cannot be insisted upon that economic reform must be the one kind of reform worthy of pursuit. If the source of power and dominion is at any given time or in any given society social and religious then social reform and religious reform must be accepted as the necessary sort of reform.

One can thus attack the doctrine of Economic Interpretation of History adopted by the Socialists of India. But I recognize the economic interpretation of history is not necessary for the validity of the Socialist contention that equalization of property is the only real reform and that it must precede everything else. However, what I like to ask the Socialists is this: Can you have economic reform without first bringing about a reform of the social order? The Socialists of India do not seem to have considered this question. I do not wish to do them an injustice. I give below a quotation from a letter, which a prominent Socialist wrote a few days ago to a friend of mine in which he said, "I do not believe that we can build up a society in India so long as there is a trace of this ill-treatment and suppression of one class by another. Believing as I do in a socialist ideal, inevitably I believe in perfect equality in the treatment of various classes and groups. I think that Socialism offers the only true remedy for this as well as other problems." Now the question that I like to ask is: Is it enough for a Socialist to say, "I believe in perfect equality in the treatment of the various classes?" To say that such a belief is enough is to disclose a complete lack of understanding of what is involved in Socialism. If Socialism is a practical programme and is not merely an ideal, distant and far off, the question for a Socialist is not whether he believes in equality. The question for him is whether he minds one class ill-treating and suppressing another class as a matter of system, as a matter of principle and thus allows tyranny and oppression to continue to divide one class from another.

Let me analyze the factors that are involved in the realization of Socialism in order to explain fully my point. Now

it is obvious that the economic reform contemplated by the Socialists cannot come about unless there is a revolution resulting in the seizure of power. That seizure of power must be by proletariat. The first question I ask is: Will the proletariat of India combine to bring about this revolution? What will men move to such an action? It seems to me that other things being equal the only thing that will move one man to take such an action is the feeling that the other man with whom he is acting are actuated by feeling of equality and fraternity, and above all, of justice. Men will not join in a revolution for the equalization of property unless they know that after the revolution is achieved they will be treated equally and that there will be no discrimination of caste and creed. The assurance of socialist leading the revolution that he does not believe in caste, I am sure, will not suffice. The assurance must be the assurance proceeding from much deeper foundation, namely, the mental attitude of the compatriots towards one another in their spirit of personal equality and fraternity. Can it be said that the proletariat of India, poor as it is, recognizes no distinction except that of the rich and the poor? Can it be said that the poor in India recognize no such distinction of caste or creed, high or low? If the fact is that they do, what unity of front can be expected from such a proletariat in its action against the rich? How can there be revolution if the proletariat cannot present a united front? Suppose for the sake of argument that by some freak fortune a revolution does take place and the Socialists come in power, will they not have to deal with the problems created by the particular social order prevalent in India? I can't see how a Socialist State in India can function for a second without having to grapple with the problems created by the prejudices which make Indian people observe the distinctions of high and low, clean and unclean. If the Socialists are not to be content with the mouthing of fine phrases, if the Socialists wish to make Socialism a definite reality, then they must recognize that the problem of social reform is fundamental and that for them there is no escape from it. That, the social order prevalent in India is a matter which a Socialist must deal with, that unless he does so he cannot

achieve his revolution and that, if he does achieve it as a result of good fortune he will have to grapple with it if he wishes to realize his ideal, is a proposition which in my opinion is incontrovertible. He will be compelled to take account of caste after revolution if he does not take account of it before revolution. **This is only another way of saying that, turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses your path. You cannot have political reform; you cannot have economic reform, unless you kill this monster.**

IV

It is pity that Caste even today has its defenders. The defenders are many. It is defended on the ground that the Caste System is but another name for division of labour and if division of labour is a necessary feature of every civilized society then it is argued that there is nothing wrong in the Caste System. Now the first thing is to be urged against this view is that **Caste System is not merely division of labour. It is also a division of labourers. But in no Civilized society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into watertight compartments. Caste System is not merely a division of labourers, which is quite different from division of labour - it is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other**³². In no other country is the division of labourer accomplished by this gradation of labourers. There is also a third point of criticism against this view of the Caste System. This division of labour is not spontaneous; it is not based on natural aptitudes. Social and individual efficiency requires us to develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and to make his own career. This principle is violated in the Caste System in so as it involves an attempt to appoint tasks to individuals in advance, selected not on the basis of trained original capacities, but on that of the social status of the parents. Looked at from another point of view this stratification of occupations that is the result of the Caste System is positively pernicious. Industry is never static. It

undergoes rapid and abrupt changes. With such changes an individual must be free to change his occupation. Without such freedom to adjust him to changing circumstances it would be impossible for him to gain his livelihood. Now the Caste System will not allow Hindus to take to occupations where they are wanted if they do not belong to them by heredity. If a Hindu is seen to starve rather than take a new occupation not assigned to his Caste, the reason is to be found in the Caste System.³³ By not permitting readjustment of occupations, caste becomes a direct cause of much of unemployment we see in the country. As a form of division of labour, the Caste system suffers from another serious defect. The division of labour brought about by the Caste System is not a division based on choice. Individual sentiment, individual preference has no place in it. It is based on the dogma of predestination. Considerations of social efficiency would compel us to recognize that the greatest evil in the industrial system is not so much poverty and the suffering that it involves as the fact that so many persons have callings, which make no appeal to those who are engaged in them. Such callings constantly provoke one to aversion, ill will and the desire to evade. There are many occupations in India, which on account of the fact that they are regarded as degraded by the Hindus provoke those who are engaged in them to aversion. There is a constant desire to evade and escape from such occupations which arises solely because of the blighting effect which they produce upon those who follow them owing to the slight and stigma cast upon them by the Hindu religion. What efficiency can there be in a system under which neither men's hearts nor their minds are in their work? As an economic organization Caste is therefore a harmful institution, in as much as it involves the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules.³⁴

V

Some have dug a biological trench in defence of the Caste System. It is said that the object of Caste was to preserve purity of race and purity of blood. Now ethnologists are of

opinion that men of pure race exist nowhere and that there has been a mixture of all races in all parts of the world; especially is this the case with the people of India. Mr. D. R. Bhandarkar in his paper on Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population has stated that "There is hardly a class, or Caste in India which has not a foreign strain in it. There is an admixture of alien blood not only among the warrior classes - the Rajputs and the Marathas - but also among the Brahmins who are under the happy delusion that they are free from all foreign elements." The Caste System cannot be said to have grown as a means of preventing the admixture of races or as a means of maintaining purity of blood. As a matter of fact Caste System came into being long after the different races of India had commingled in blood and culture. To hold that distinctions of Caste or really distinctions of race and to treat different Castes as though they were so many different races is a gross perversion of facts. What racial affinity is there between the Brahmins of the Punjab and the Brahmins of Madras? What racial affinity is there between the Untouchables of Bengal and the Untouchables of Madras? What racial difference is there between the Brahmins of the Punjab and the *Chamars* of the Punjab? What racial difference is there between the Brahmins of Madras and the Pariah of Madras? The Brahmin of the Punjab is racially of the same stock as the *Chamar* of the Punjab and the Brahmin of Madras is of the same race as the Pariah of Madras. Caste System does not demarcate racial division. Caste System is a social division of people of the same race. Assuming it, however, to be a case of racial division one may ask: What harm could there be if a mixture of races and of blood was permitted to take place in India by intermarriages between different Castes? Men are no doubt divided from animals by so deep a distinction that science recognizes men and animals as two distinct species. But even scientists who believe in purity of races do not assert that different races constitute different species of men. They are only varieties of one and the same species. As such they can interbreed and produce an offspring which is capable of breeding and which is not sterile. An immense lot of nonsense is talked about heredity and

eugenics in defence of the Caste System. Few would object to the Caste System if it were in accord with the basic principle of eugenics because few can object to the improvement of the race by judicious mating. But one fails to understand how the Caste System secures judicious mating. Caste System is a negative thing. It merely prohibits persons belonging to different Castes from intermarrying. It is not a positive method of selecting which two among a given Caste should marry. If Caste is eugenic in origin then the origin of sub-Castes must also be eugenic. But can anyone seriously maintain that the origin of sub-Castes is eugenic? I think it would be absurd to contend for such a proposition and for a very obvious reason. If Caste means race then differences of sub-Castes cannot mean differences of race because sub-Castes become *ex hypothesia* sub-divisions of one and the same race. Consequently the bar against Intermarrying and inter-dining between sub-Castes cannot be for the purpose of maintaining purity of race or of blood. If sub-Castes cannot be eugenic in origin there cannot be any substance in the contention that Caste is eugenic in origin.

Again if Caste is eugenic in origin one can understand the bar against intermarriage. But what is the purpose of the interdict placed on inter-dining between Castes and sub-Castes alike? Inter-dining cannot infect blood and therefore cannot be the cause either of the improvement or of deterioration of the race. This shows that Caste has no scientific origin and that those who are attempting to give it a eugenic basis are trying to support by science what is grossly unscientific. Even today eugenics cannot become a practical possibility unless we have a definite knowledge regarding the laws of heredity. Prof. Bateson³⁵ in his 'Mendel's Principles of Heredity' says, "There is nothing in the descent of the higher mental qualities to suggest that they follow any single system of transmission. It is likely that both they and the more marked developments of physical powers result rather from the coincidence of numerous factors than from the possession of any one genetic element." To argue that the Caste System was eugenic in its conception is to attribute to the forefathers of present-day Hindus knowledge of

heredity, which even the modern scientists do not possess. The fruit it yields should judge a tree. If Caste is eugenic what sort of a race of men it should have produced? Physically speaking the Hindus are a Category three people. They are the race of pygmies and dwarfs³⁶ stunted in stature and wanting in stamina. It is a nation 9/10th of which is declared to be unfit for military service.³⁷ This shows that the Caste System does not embody the eugenics of modern scientists. It is a social system which embodies the arrogance and selfishness of a perverse section of the Hindus who were superior enough in social status to set it in fashion and who had authority to force it on their inferiors.

VI

Caste does not result in economic efficiency. Caste cannot and has not improved the race. Caste has however done one thing. It has completely disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. The first and foremost thing that must be recognized is that Hindu Society is a myth. The name Hindu is itself a foreign name. The Mohammedans³⁸ gave it to the natives for the purpose of distinguishing themselves. It does not occur in any Sanskrit work prior to the Mohammedan's invasion. They did not feel the necessity of a common name because they had no conception of their having constituted a community. Hindu society as such does not exist. It is only a collection of castes. Each caste is conscious of its existence.

Its survival is the be all and end all of its existence. Caste does not even form a federation. A caste has no feeling that it is affiliated to other castes except when there is a Hindu-Muslim riot. On all other occasions each caste endeavours to segregate itself and to distinguish itself from other castes. Each caste not only dines among itself and marries among itself, but each caste prescribes its own distinctive dress. What other explanation can there be of the innumerable styles of dress worn by the men and women of India, which so amuse the tourists? Indeed the ideal Hindu must be like a rat living in his own hole refusing to have any contact with others. There is an utter lack

among the Hindus of what the sociologists call "consciousness of kind." There is not Hindu consciousness of kind. In every Hindu the consciousness that exists is the consciousness of his caste.

That is the reason why the Hindus cannot be said to form a society or a nation. There are however many Indians whose patriotism does not permit them to admit that Indians are not a nation, that they are only an amorphous mass of people. They have insisted that underlying the apparent diversity there is a fundamental unity which marks the life of the Hindus in as much as there is a similarity of habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts which one obtains all over the continent of India. Similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts there is. But one cannot accept the conclusion that, therefore, the Hindus constitute a society. To do so is to misunderstand the essentials, which go to make up a society. Men do not become a society by living in physical proximity any more than a man ceases to be a member of his society by living so many miles away from other men. Secondly, similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts is not enough to constitute men into society. Things may be passed physically from one to another like bricks. In the same way habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts of one group may be taken over by another group and there may thus appear a similarity between the two. Culture spreads by diffusion and that is why one finds similarity between various primitive tribes in the matter of their habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts, although they do not live in proximity. But no one could say that because there was this similarity in them, the primitive tribes constituted one society. This is because similarity in certain things is not enough to constitute a society. Men constitute a society because they have things, which they possess in common. To have a similar thing is totally different from possessing things in common. And the only way by which men can come to possess things in common with one another is by being in communication with one another. This is merely another way of saying that Society continues to exist by communication indeed in communication. To make it concrete, it is not enough if men act in a way, which agrees with the acts of others. Parallel

activity, even if similar, is not sufficient to bid men into a society. This is proved by the fact that the festivals observed by the different Castes amongst the Hindus are the same. Yet these parallel performances of similar festivals by the different castes have not bound them into one integral whole. For that purpose what is necessary is for a man to share and participate in a common activity so that the same emotions are aroused in him that animate the others. Making the individual a sharer or partner in the associated activity so that he feels its success as his success, its failure as his failure, is the real thing that binds men and makes a society of them. The Caste System prevents common activity and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being.

VII

The Hindus often complain of the isolation and exclusiveness of a gang or a clique and blame them for anti-social spirit. But they conveniently forgot that this anti-social spirit is the worst feature of their own Caste System. One caste enjoys singing a hymn of hate against another caste as much as the Germans did in singing their hymn of hate against the English during the last war. The literature of the Hindus is full of caste genealogies in which an attempt is made to give a notable origin to one caste and an ignoble origin to other caste. The *Sahyadrikhand* is a notorious instance of this class of literature. This anti-social spirit is not confined to caste alone. It has gone deeper and has poisoned the mutual relation of the sub-castes as well. In my province the Golak Brahmins, Deorukha Brahmins, Karada Brahmins, Palshe Brahmins and Chitpavan Brahmins, all claim to be sub-divisions of the Brahmin Caste. But the anti-social spirit that prevails between them is quite as marked and quite as virulent as the anti-social spirit that prevails between them and other non-Brahmin castes. There is nothing strange in this. An anti-social spirit is found wherever one group has "interests of its own" who shut it out from full interaction with other groups, so that its prevailing purpose is protection of what it has got. This anti-social spirit, this spirit of protecting its own

interests is as much a marked feature of the different castes in their isolation from one another as it is of nations in their isolation. The Brahmin's primary concern is to protect "his interest" against those of the non-Brahmins and the non-Brahmin's primary concern is to protect his interests against those of the Brahmins. The Hindus, therefore, are not merely an assortment of castes but they are so many warring groups each living for itself and for its selfish ideal. There is another feature of caste, which is deplorable. The ancestors of the present-day English fought on one side or the other in the wars of the Roses³⁹ and the Cromwellian War⁴⁰. But the descendents of those who fought on the one side do not bear any animosity-any grudge against the descendents of those who fought on the other side. The feud is forgotten. But the present-day non-Brahmins cannot forgive the present-day Brahmins for the insult their ancestors gave to Shivaji. The present-day Kshatriyas will not forgive the present-day Brahmins for the infamy cast upon their forefathers by the forefathers of the latter. To what is this difference due? Obviously, it is due to the Caste System. The existence of Caste consciousness has served to keep the memory of past feuds between castes green and has prevented solidarity.

VIII

The recent discussion about the excluded and partially included areas has served to draw attention to the position of what are called the aboriginal tribes in India. They number about 13 million if not more. Apart from the questions whether their exclusion from the new Constitution is proper or improper, the fact remains that these aborigines have remained in their primitive uncivilized State in a land, which boasts of a civilization thousands of years old. Not only are they not civilized but some of them follow pursuits, which have led to their being classified as criminals.⁴¹ Thirteen millions of people living in the midst of civilization are still in a savage state and are leading the life of hereditary criminals!! But the Hindus have never felt ashamed of it. This is a phenomenon, which in my view is quite unparalleled. What is the cause of this shameful

state of affairs? Why has no attempt been made to civilize these aborigines and to lead them to take to a more honourable way of making a living? The Hindus will probably seek to account for this savage state of the aborigines by attributing to them congenial stupidity. They will probably not admit that the aborigines have remained savage because they had made no effort to civilize them, to give them medical aid, to reform them, to make them good citizens. But supposing a Hindu wished to do what the Christian missionary is doing for the aborigines, could he have done it? I submit not.⁴² Civilizing the aborigines means adopting them as your own, living in their midst, and cultivating fellow feeling, in short, loving them. How is it possible for a Hindu to do this? His whole life is one anxious effort to preserve his caste. Caste is his precious possession, which he must save at any cost. He cannot consent to lose it by establishing contact with the aborigines the remnants of the hateful *Anaryas*⁴³ of the Vedic days. Not that a Hindu could not be taught the sense of duty to fallen humanity, but the trouble is that no amount of sense of duty can enable him to overcome his duty to preserve his caste. Caste is, therefore, the real explanation as to why the Hindu has let the savage remain a savage in the midst of his civilization without blushing or without feeling any sense of remorse or repentance. The Hindu has not realized that these aborigines are a source of potential danger. If these savages remain savages they may not do any harm to the Hindus. But if they are reclaimed by non-Hindus and converted to their faith they will swell the ranks of the enemies of the Hindus. If this happens the Hindu will have to thank himself and his Caste System.

IX

Not only has the Hindu made no effort for the humanitarian cause of civilizing the savages but also the higher-caste Hindus have deliberately prevented the lower castes that are within the pale of Hinduism from rising to the cultural level of the higher castes. I will give two instances, one of the Sonars and the other of the Pathare Prabhus. Both are communities quite

well known in Maharashtra. Like the rest of the communities desiring to raise their status these two communities were at one time endeavouring to adopt some of the ways and habits of the Brahmins. The Sonars were desperately trying to look and act like Daivaddnya Brahmins and were wearing their "dhotis" with folds on and using the word *namaskar* for salutation. Both, the folded way of wearing the 'dhoti' and the *namaskar* were special to Brahmins. The Brahmins did not like this imitation and this attempt by Sonars to pass off as Brahmins. Under the authority of the *Peshwas* the Brahmins successfully put down this attempt on the part of the Sonars to adopt the ways of the Brahmins. They even got the President of the Councils of the East India Company's settlement in Bombay to issue a propitiatory order against the Sonars residing in Bombay.⁴⁴ At one time the Pathare Prabhus had widow-remarriage as a custom of their caste. Some members of the caste later on looked upon this custom of widow-remarriage as a mark of social inferiority especially because it was contrary to the custom prevalent among the Brahmins. With the object of raising the status of their community some Pathare Prabhus sought to stop this practice of widow-remarriage that was prevalent in their caste. The community was divided into two camps, one for and the other against the innovation. The *Peshwas* took the side of those in favour of widow-remarriage and thus virtually prohibited the Pathare Prabhus from following the ways of the Brahmins. The Hindus criticize the Mohammedans for having spread their religion by the use of the sword. They also ridicule Christianity on the score of inquisition. But really speaking who is better and more worthy of our respect - the Mohammedans and Christians who attempted to thrust down the throats of unwilling persons what they regarded as necessary for their salvation or the Hindu who would not spread the light, who would endeavour to keep others to share his intellectual and social inheritance with those who are ready and willing to make it a part of their own make-up? I have no hesitation in saying that if the Mohammedans have been cruel the Hindu has been mean and meanness is worse than

cruelty.

Whether the Hindu religion was or was not missionary religion has been a controversial issue. Some hold the view that it was never a missionary religion. Others hold that it was. That the Hindu religion was once a missionary religion must be admitted. It could not have spread over the face of India, if it was not a missionary religion. That today it is not a missionary religion is also a fact, which must be accepted. The question therefore is not whether or not the Hindu religion was a missionary religion. The real answer is why did the Hindu religion cease to be a missionary religion? My answer is this. Hindu religion ceased to be a missionary religion when the Caste System grew up among the Hindus. Caste is inconsistent with conversion. Inculcation of beliefs and dogmas is not the only problem that is involved in conversion. A much more important problem arises in connection with the conversion and that is to find a place for the convert in social life of the community. That problem is where to place the convert, in what caste? It is a problem, which must baffle every Hindu wishing to make aliens converts to his religion. Unlike the club the membership of a caste is not open to all and sundry. The law of caste confines its membership to person born in the caste. Castes are autonomous and there is not authority anywhere to compel a caste to admit a newcomer to its social life. Hindu society being a collection of castes and each caste being a close corporation there is no place for a convert. Thus it is the caste, which has prevented the Hindus from expanding and from absorbing other religious communities. So long as castes remain, Hindu religion cannot be made a missionary religion and *Shudhi* will be both a folly and futile.

XI

The reasons, which have made *Shudhi* impossible for Hindus are also responsible for making *Sanghatan* impossible. The idea underlying *Sanghatan* is to remove from the mind of the Hindu that timidity and cowardice which so painfully mark him off from the Mohammedan and the Sikh and which have led

him to adopt the low ways of treachery and cunning for protecting himself. The question naturally arises: From where does the Sikh or the Mohammedan derives his strength, which makes him brave and fearless? I am sure it is not due to relative superiority of physical strength, diet or drill. It is due to the strength arising out of the feeling that all Sikhs will come to the rescue of a Sikh when he is in danger and that all Mohammedans will rush to save a Muslim if he is attacked. The Hindu can derive no such strength. He cannot feel assured that his fellows will come to his help. Being one and fated to be alone, he remains powerless, develops timidity and cowardice and in a fight surrenders or runs away. The Sikh as well as the Muslim stands fearless and gives battle because he knows that though one he will not be alone. The presence of this belief in the one helps him to hold out and the absence of it in the other makes him to give way. If you pursue this matter further and ask what is it that enables the Sikh, the Mohammedan to feel so assured, and why is the Hindu filled with such despair in the matter of help and assistance, you will find the reason for this difference lies in the difference in their associated mode of living. The associated mode of life practiced by the Sikhs and the Mohammedans produce fellow feeling. The associated mode of life of the Hindus does not. Among Sikhs and Muslims there is a social cement which makes them *Bhai*. Among Hindus there is no such cement and one Hindu does not regard another Hindu as his *Bhai*. This explains why a Sikh says and feels that one Sikh, or one *Khalsa* is equal to *Sava Lakh*. This explains why one Mohammedan is equal to a crowd of Hindus. This difference is undoubtedly a difference due to caste. So long as caste remains, there will be no *Sanghatan* and so long as there is no *Sanghatan* the Hindu will remain weak and meek. The Hindus claim to be a very tolerant people. In my opinion this is a mistake.⁴⁵ On many occasions they can be intolerant and if on some occasions they are tolerant that is because they are too weak to oppose or too indifferent to oppose. This indifference of the Hindus has become so much apart of their nature that a Hindu will quite meekly tolerate an insult as well as a wrong. You see amongst

them, to use the word of Morris⁴⁶, " The great reading down the little, the strong beating down the weak, cruel men fearing not, kind men daring not and wise men caring not." With the Hindu Gods all-forbearing, it is not difficult to imagine the pitiable condition of the wronged and the oppressed among the Hindus. Indifferentism is the worst kind of disease that can infect a people. Why is the Hindu so indifferent? In my opinion this indifferentism is the result of Caste System, which has made *Sanghatan* and co-operation even for a good cause impossible.

XII

The assertion by the individual of his own opinions and beliefs, his own independence and interest as over against group standards, group authority and group interests is the beginning of all reform. But whether the reform will continue depends upon what scope the group affords for such individual assertion. If the group is tolerant and fair-minded in dealing with such individuals they, will continue to assert and in the end succeed in converting their fellows. On the other hand if the group is intolerant and does not bother about the means it adopts to stifle such individuals, they will perish and the reform will die out. Now a caste has an unquestioned right to excommunicate any man who is guilty of breaking the rules of the caste and when it is realized that excommunication involves a complete ceaser (from old English *cesser*) of social intercourse it will be agreed that as a form of punishment there is really little to choose between excommunication and death. No wonder individual Hindus have not had the courage to assert their independence by breaking the barriers of caste. It is true that man cannot get on with his fellows.⁴⁷ But it is also true that he cannot do without them. He would like to have the society of his fellows on his terms. If he cannot get it on his own terms then he will be ready to have it on any terms even amounting to complete surrender. This is because he cannot do without society. A caste is ever ready to take advantage of the helplessness of man and insist upon complete conformity to its code in letter and in spirit. A caste can easily organize itself into a conspiracy to make the life of a reformer a hell and if a conspiracy is a crime I do not under-

stand why such a nefarious act as an attempt to excommunicate a person for daring to act contrary to the rule of caste should not be made an offence punishable in law. But as it is, even law authorizes each caste to regulate its membership and punish dissenters with excommunication. Caste in the hands of the orthodox has been a powerful weapon for persecuting the reformers and for killing all reform.⁴⁸

XIII

The effect of caste on the ethics of the Hindus is simply deplorable. Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu's public is his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for no response. There is charity but begins with the caste and ends with the caste.⁴⁹ There is sympathy but not for men of other castes. Would a Hindu acknowledge and follow the leadership of a great and good man? In that case, the answer must be that he will follow a leader if he is a man of his caste. A Brahmin will follow a leader only if he is a Brahmin, a Kayastha if he is a Kayastha and so on. The capacity to appreciate merits in a man apart from his caste does not exist in a Hindu. There is appreciation of virtue but only when the man is a fellow caste-man. The whole morality is as bad as tribal morality; whether the tribal man is wrong or right or good or bad, it is not a case of standing by virtue and not by standing by vice. It is a case of standing or not standing by the caste. Have not Hindus committed treason against their country in the interests of their caste?⁵⁰

XIV

I would not be surprised if some of you have grown weary listening to this tiresome tale of the sad effects which caste has produced. There is nothing new in it. I will therefore

turn to the constructive side of the problem. What is your ideal society if you do not want caste is a question that is bound to be asked of you? If you ask me, my ideal would be a society based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. And why not? What objection can there be to Fraternity? I cannot imagine any. An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change-taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of associations. In other words there must be social endosmosis. This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy. Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen. Is there any objection to Liberty? Few object to liberty in the sense of a right to free movement, in the sense of a right to life and limb. There is no objection to liberty in the sense of a right to property, tools and materials as being necessary for earning a living to keep the body in due state of health. Why not allow liberty to benefit by an effective and competent use of a person's power? The supporters of caste who would allow liberty in the sense of a right to life, limb and property, would not readily consent to liberty in this sense, inasmuch as it involves liberty to choose one's profession. But to object to this kind of liberty is to perpetuate slavery. For slavery does not merely mean a legalized form of subjection. It means a state of society in which some men are forced to accept from other the purposes, which control their conduct. This condition obtains even where there is no slavery in the legal sense. It is found where, as in the Caste System, some persons are compelled to carry a certain prescribed callings, which are not of their choice.⁵¹ Any objection to equality? This has obviously been the most contentious part of the slogan of the French Revolution.

The objection to equality may be sound and one may have to admit that all men are not equal. Equality may be a fiction but nonetheless one must accept it as the governing principle. A man's power is dependent upon (1) physical heredity, (2) social inheritance or endowment in the form of parental care, education, accumulation of scientific knowledge, everything which enables him to be more efficient than the savage, and finally,

(Continued on next page)



REVOLUTION IN THE MAKING?' *Shudra* women go through their paces during a training session in Nawada, Bihar, India.

(continued from previous page)

(3) on his own efforts. In all these three respects men are undoubtedly unequal. But the question is, shall we treat them as unequal because they are unequal? This is a question, which the opponents of equality must answer. From the standpoint of the industrialist it may be just to treat men unequally so far as their efforts are unequal.

It may be desirable to give as much incentive as possible to the full development of every one's power. But what would happen if men were treated unequally as they are, in the first two respects? It is obvious that those individuals also in whose favour there are birth, education, family name, business connections and inherited wealth, would be selected in the race. But selection under such circumstances would not be a selection of the able. It would be the selection of the privileged. The reason therefore, which forces that in the third respect we should treat men unequally, demands that in the first two respects we should treat men as equally as possible. On the other hand it can be urged that if it is good for the social body to get the most out of its members, it can get most out of them only by making them equal as far as possible at the very start of the race. That is one

reason why we cannot escape equality. But there is another reason why we must accept equality. A statesman is concerned with vast number of people. He has neither the time nor the knowledge to draw fine distinctions and to treat each equitably i.e. according to need or according to capacity. However desirable or reasonable an equitable treatment of men may be, humanity is not capable of assortment and classification. The statesman, therefore, must follow some rough and ready rule and that rough and ready rule is to treat all men alike not because they are alike but because classification and assortment is impossible. The doctrine of equality is glaringly fallacious but taking all in all it is the only way a statesman can proceed in politics which is a severely practical affair and which demands a severely practical test.

XV

But there is a set of reformers who hold out a different ideal. They go by the name of *Arya Samajists*⁵² and their ideal of social organization is what is called *Chaturvarnya* or the division of society into four classes instead of the four thousand castes that we have in India. To make it more attractive and to disarm opposition the protagonists of *Chaturvarnya* take great care to point out that their *Chaturvarnya* is based not on birth but on *guna*⁵³. At the outset, I must confess that notwithstanding the worth-basis of this *Chaturvarnya*, it is an ideal to which I cannot reconcile myself. In the first place, if under the *Chaturvarnya* of the *Arya Samajists* an individual is to take his place in the Hindu Society according to his worth. I do not understand why the *Arya Samajists* insist upon labeling men as Brahmin, *Kshatriya*, and *Vaishya* and *Shudra*. A learned man would be honoured without his being labeled a Brahmin. A soldier would be respected without his being designated a *Kshatriya*. If European society honours its soldiers and its servants without giving them permanent labels, why should Hindu Society find it difficult to do so is a question, which *Arya Samajists* have not cared to consider? There is another objection to the continuance of these labels. All reform consists in a change in the notions, sentiment

and mental attitudes of the people towards men and things. It is common experience that certain names become associated with certain notions and sentiments, which determine a person's attitude towards men and things. The names, Brahmin, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudra*, are names, which are associated with a definite and fixed notion in the mind of every Hindu. That notion is that of a hierarchy based on birth. So long as names continue, Hindus will continue to think of the Brahmin, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra* as hierarchical division of high and low, based on birth, and act accordingly. The Hindus must be made to unlearn all this⁵⁴. But, how can this happen if the old labels remain and continue to recall old notions to his mind. If new notions are to be inculcated in the minds of people it is necessary to give them new names. To continue this *Chaturvarnya*, based on worth to be designated by such stinking labels of Brahmin *Kshtriya*, *Vaishya*⁵⁵, *Shudra*, indicative of social divisions based on birth, is a snare.

XVI

To me this *Chaturvarnya* with its old labels is utterly repellent and my whole being rebels against it. But I do not wish to rest my objection to *Chaturvarnya* on grounds of sentiments. There are more solid grounds on which I rely for my opposition to it. A close examination of this ideal has convinced me that as a system of social organization, *Chaturvarnya* is impracticable, harmful and has turned out to be a miserable failure. From a practical point of view, the system of *Chaturvarnya* raises several difficulties, which its protagonists do not seem to have taken into account. The principle underlying caste is fundamentally different from the principle underlying *Varna*. Not only are they fundamentally different but also they are fundamentally opposed. The former is based on worth. How are you going to compel people who have acquired a higher status based on birth without reference to their worth to vacate that status? How are you going to compel people to recognize the status due to a man in accordance with his worth, who is

occupying a lower status based on his birth? For this you must first break up the Caste System, in order to be able to establish the *Varna* system. How are you going to reduce the four thousand castes, based on birth, to the four *Varnas*, based on worth? This is the first difficulty, which the protagonists of the *Chaturvarnya* must grapple with. There is a second difficulty, which the protagonists of *Chaturvarnya* must grapple with, if they wish to make the establishment of *Chaturvarnya* a success.

Chaturvarnya pre-supposes that you can classify people into four definite classes. Is this possible? In this respect, the ideal of *Chaturvarnya* has, as you will see, a close affinity to the Platonic ideal. To Plato⁵⁶, men fell by nature into three classes. In some individuals, he believed mere appetites dominated. He assigned them to the labouring and trading classes. Others revealed to him that over and above appetites, they have a courageous disposition. He classed them as defenders in war and guardians of internal peace. Others showed a capacity to grasp the universal reason underlying things. He made them the lawgivers of the people. The criticism, to which Plato's Republic is subject, is also the criticism which must apply to the system of *Chaturvarnya*, in so far as it proceeds upon the possibility of an accurate classification of men into four distinct classes. The chief criticism against Plato is that his idea of lumping of individuals into a few sharply marked-off classes is a very superficial view of man and his powers. Plato had no perception of the uniqueness of every individual, of his incommensurability with others, of each individual forming a class of his own. He had no recognition of the infinite diversity of active tendencies and combination of tendencies of which an individual is capable. To him, there were types of faculties or powers in the individual constitution. All this is demonstrably wrong. Modern science has shown that lumping together of individuals into a few sharply marked-off classes is a superficial view of man not worthy of serious consideration. Consequently, the utilization of the qualities of individuals is incompatible with their stratification by classes, since the qualities of individuals are so variable. *Chaturvarnya* must fail for the very reason for which Plato's

Republic must fail, namely that it is not possible to pigeon men into holes, according as he belongs to one class or the other. That it is impossible to accurately classify people into four definite classes is proved by the fact that the original four classes have now become four thousand castes.

There is a third difficulty in the way of the establishment of the system of *Chaturvarniya*. How are you going to maintain the system of *Chaturvarniya*, supposing it was established? One important requirement for the successful working of *Chaturvarniya* is the maintenance of the penal system, which could maintain it by its sanction. The system of *Chaturvarniya* must perpetually face the problem of the transgressor. Unless there is a penalty attached to the act of transgression, men will not keep to their respective classes. The whole system will break down, being contrary to human nature. *Chaturvarniya* cannot subsist by its own inherent goodness. Law must enforce it. That without penal sanction the ideal of *Chaturvarniya* cannot be realized, is proved by the story in the Ramayana of Rama killing Shambuka. Some people seem to blame Rama because he wantonly and without reason killed Shambuka. But to blame Rama for killing Shambuka is to misunderstand the whole situation. Rama's Raj was a Raj based on *Chaturvarniya*. As a king, Rama was bound to maintain *Chaturvarniya*. It was his duty therefore to kill Shambuka, the *Shudra*, who had transgressed his class and wanted to be a Brahmin. This is the reason why Rama killed Shambuka. But this also shows that penal sanction is necessary for the maintenance of *Chaturvarniya*. Not only penal sanction is necessary, but also penalty of death is necessary. That is why Rama did not inflict on Shambuka a lesser punishment. That is why *Manusmriti* prescribes such heavy sentences as cutting off the tongue or pouring of molten lead in the ears of the *Shudra*, who recites or hears the Veda⁵⁷. The supporters of *Chaturvarniya* must give an assurance that they could successfully classify men and they could induce modern society in the twentieth century to re-forge the penal sanctions of *Manusmriti*.

The protagonists of *Chaturvarniya* do not seem to have

considered what is to happen to women in their system. Are they also to be divided into four classes, Brahmin, *Kshtriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra*? Or are they to be allowed to take the status of their husbands? If the status of the woman is to be consequence of marriage what becomes of the underlying principle of *Chaturvarnya*, namely, that the status of a person should be based upon the worth, of that person? If they are to be classified according to their worth is their classification to be nominal or real? If it is to be nominal then it is useless and then the protagonists of *Chaturvarnya* must admit that their system does not apply to women. If it is real, are the protagonists of *Chaturvarnya* prepared to follow the logical consequences of applying it to women? They must be prepared to have women priests and women soldiers. Hindu society has grown accustomed to women teachers and women barristers. It may grow accustomed to women brewers and women butchers. But he would be a bold person, who would say that he would allow women priests and women soldiers. But that will be the logical outcome of applying *Chaturvarnya* to women. Given these difficulties, I think no one except a congenital idiot could hope and believe in a successful regeneration of the *Chaturvarnya*⁵⁸.

XVII

Assuming that *Chaturvarnya* is practicable, I contend that it is the most vicious system. That the Brahmins should cultivate knowledge, that the *Kshtriya* should bear arms, that the *Vaishya* should trade and that the *Shudra* should serve sounds as though it was a system of division of labour. Whether the theory was intended to state that the *Shudra* need not or that whether it was intended to lay down that he must not, is an interesting question. The defenders of *Chaturvarnya* give it the first meaning. They say why should *Shudra* need trouble to acquire wealth, when the three *varnas* are there to support him? Why need the *Shudra* bother to take to education, when there is the Brahmin to whom he can go when the occasion for reading or writing arises? Why should the *Shudra* worry to arm himself because there is the *Kshtriya* to protect him? The theory of

Chaturvarnya, understood in this sense, may be said to look upon the *Shudra* as the ward and the three *Varnas* as his guardians. Thus interpreted, it is a simple, elevating and alluring theory. Assuming this to be the correct view of the underlying conception of *Chaturvarnya*, it seems to me that the system is neither foolproof nor knave-proof. What is to happen, if the Brahmins, *Vaishyas* and *Kshatriyas* fail to pursue knowledge, to engage in economic enterprise and to be efficient soldiers, which are their respective functions? Contrary-wise, suppose that they discharge their functions but flout their duty to the *Shudra* or to one another, what is to happen to the *Shudra* if the three classes refuse to support him on fair terms or combine to keep him down? Who is to safeguard the interests of the *Shudra* or for the matter that of the *Vaishya* and *Kshatriya* when the person, who is trying to take advantage of his ignorance, is the Brahmin?

Who is to defend the liberty of the *Shudra* and for the matter of that, of the Brahmin and the *Vaishya* when the person who is robbing him of it is the *Kshatriya*? Interdependence of one class on another class is inevitable. Even dependence of one class upon another may sometimes become allowable. But why make one person depend upon another in the matter of his vital needs? Education everyone must have. Means of defence everyone must have. These are the paramount requirements of every man for his self-preservation. How can the fact that his neighbour is educated and armed help a man who is uneducated and unarmed? The whole theory is absurd. These are the questions, which the defenders of *Chaturvarnya* do not seem to be troubled about. But they are very pertinent questions. Assuming their conception of *Chaturvarnya*, that the relationship between the different classes is that of ward and guardian, is the real conception underlying *Chaturvarnya*, it must be admitted that it make no provision to safeguard the interests of the ward from the misdeeds of the guardian. Whether the relationship of guardian and ward was the real underlying conception, on which *Chaturvarnya* was based, there is no doubt that in practice the relation was that of master and servants. The three classes, *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas* although not very happy in

their mutual relationship managed to work by compromise. The Brahmin flattered the *Kshtriya* and both let the *Vaishya* live in order to be able to live upon him. But the three agreed to beat down the *Shudra*. He was not allowed to acquire wealth lest he should be independent of the three *Varnas*. He was prohibited from acquiring knowledge lest he should keep a steady vigil regarding his interests. He was prohibited from bearing arms lest he should have the means to rebel against their authority. That this is how the *Tryavarnikas* treated *Shudras* is evidenced by the Laws of Manu. There is no code of law more infamous regarding social rights than the Laws of Manu. Any instance from anywhere of social injustice must pale before it. Why have the mass of people tolerated the social evil to which they have been subjected? There have been social revolutions in other countries of the world. Why have there not been social revolutions in India is a question which has incessantly troubled me. There is only one answer, which I can give and it is that the lower classes of Hindus have been completely disabled for direct action on account of this wretched system of *Chaturvarnya*. They could not bear arms and without arms they could not rebel. They were all ploughmen or rather condemned to be ploughmen and they never were allowed to convert their ploughshare into swords. They had no bayonets and therefore everyone who chose could and did sit upon them. On account of the *Chaturvarnya*, they could receive no education. They could not think out or know the way to their salvation. They were condemned to be lowly and not knowing the way of escape and not having the means of escape, they became reconciled to eternal servitude, which they accepted as their inescapable fate. It is true that even in Europe the strong has not shrunk from the exploitation, nay the spoliation of the weak. But in Europe, the strong have never contrived to make the weak helpless against exploitation so shamelessly as was the case in India among the Hindus. Social war has been raging between the strong and the weak far more violently in Europe than it has ever been in India. Yet, the weak in Europe has had in his freedom of military service his physical weapon, in suffrage his political weapon and in education his

moral weapon. These three weapons for emancipation were never withheld by the strong from the weak in Europe. All these weapons were, however, denied to the masses in India by *Chaturvarnya*. There cannot be a more degrading system of social organization than the *Chaturvarnya*. It is the system, which deadens, paralyses and cripples the people from helpful activity. This is not exaggeration. History bears ample evidence. There is only one period in Indian history, which is a period of freedom, greatness and glory. That is the period of the Mourya Empire⁵⁹. At all other times the country suffered from defeat and darkness⁶⁰. But the Maurya period was a period when *Chaturvarnya* was completely annihilated, when the *Shudras*, who constituted the mass of the people, came into their own and became the rulers of the country. The period of defeat and darkness is the period when *Chaturvarnya* flourished to the damnation of the greater part of the people of the country.

XVIII

Chaturvarnya is not new. It is as old as Vedas. That is one of the reasons why we are asked by the *Arya Samajists* to consider its claims. Judging from the past as a system of social organization, it has been tried and it has failed. How many times have the Brahmins annihilated the seed of the *Kshatriyas*! How many times have the *Kshatriyas* annihilated the Brahmins! The *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* are full of incidents of the strife between the Brahmins and the *Kshatriyas*. They even quarreled over such petty questions as to who should salute first, as to who should give way first, the Brahmins or the *Kshatriyas*, when the two met in the street. Not only was the Brahmin eyesore to the *Kshatriya* and the *Kshatriya* an eyesore to the Brahmin, it seems that the *Kshatriyas* had become tyrannical of the masses, who disarmed as they were under the system of *Chaturvarnya*, were praying Almighty God for relief from their tyranny. The Bhagavad-Gita tells us very definitely that Krishna had taken Avatar for one sacred purpose and that was to annihilate the *Kshatriyas*. With these instances of rivalry and enmity between the different *Varnas* before us, I do not understand how any one can hold out *Chaturvanya* as an ideal to be aimed at or as a

pattern, on which the Hindu Society should be remodeled.

XIX

I have dealt with those, who are without you and whose hostility to your ideal is quite open. There appear to be others, who are neither without you nor with you. I was hesitating whether I should deal with their point of view. But on further consideration I have come to the conclusion that I must and that for two reasons. Firstly, their attitude to the problem of caste is not merely an attitude of neutrality, but is an attitude of armed neutrality. Secondly, they probably represent a considerable body of people. Of these, there is one set, which finds nothing, neither peculiar nor odious, in the Caste System of the Hindus. Such Hindus cite the case of Muslims, Sikhs and Christians and find comfort in the fact that they too have castes amongst them. In considering this question you must at the outset bear in mind that nowhere is human society one single whole. It is always plural. In the world of action, the individual is one limit and society the other. Between them lie all sorts of associative arrangements of lesser and larger scope, families, friendship, co-operative associations, business combines, political parties, bands of thieves and robbers. These small groups are usually firmly welded together and are often as exclusive as castes. They have a narrow and intensive code, which is often anti-social. This is true of every society, in Europe as well as in Asia. The question to be asked in determining whether a given society is an ideal society, is not whether there are groups in it, because groups exist in all societies. The questions to be asked in determining what is an ideal society are: How numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared by the groups? How full and free is the interplay with other forms of associations? Are the forces that separate groups and classes more numerous than the forces that unite? What social significance is attached to this group life? Is its exclusiveness a matter of custom and convenience or is it a matter of religion?⁶¹ It is in the light of these questions that one must decide whether caste among Non-Hindus is the same as caste among Hindus. If we apply these considerations to castes among Mohammedans,

Sikhs and Christians on the one hand and to castes among Hindus on the other, you will find that caste among Non-Hindus is fundamentally different from caste among Hindus. First, the ties, which consciously make the Hindus hold together, are non-existent, while among Non-Hindus there are many that hold them together. The strength of a society depends upon the presence of points of contact, possibilities of interaction between different groups, which exist in it. These are what Carlyle⁶² calls "organic filaments" i.e. the elastic threads which help to bring the disintegrating elements together and to reunite them. There is no integrating force among the Hindus to counteract the disintegration caused by caste, while among the Non-Hindus there are plenty of these organic filaments, which bind them together. Again it must be borne in mind that although there are castes among Non-Hindus, as there are among Hindus, caste has not the same social significance for Non-Hindus as it has for Hindus. Ask Mohammedans or a Sikh, who he is? He tells you that he is a Mohammedan or a Sikh as the case may be. He does not tell you his caste although he has one and you are satisfied with his answer. When he tells you that he is a Muslim, you do not proceed to ask him whether he is a *Shiah* or a Sunni; Sheikh or Saiyad; Khatik or Pinjari. When he tells you he is a Sikh, you do not ask him whether he is a *Jat* or *Roda*, *Mazhabi* or *Ramdasi*⁶³. But you are not satisfied, if a person tells you that he is a Hindu. You feel bound to inquire into his caste. Why? Because so essential is caste in the case of a Hindu that without knowing it you do not feel sure what sort of a being he is. That caste has not the same social significance among Non-Hindus as it has among Hindus is clear if you take into consideration the consequences, which follow breach of caste. There may be castes among Sikhs and Mohammedans but the Sikhs and the Mohammedans will not outcast a Sikh or a Mohammedan if he broke his caste. Indeed, the very idea of excommunication is foreign to the Sikhs and the Mohammedans. But with the Hindus the case is entirely different. He is sure to be outcaste if he broke caste. This shows the difference in the social significance of caste to Hindus and Non-Hindus. This is the second point of

difference. But there is also a third and a more important one. Caste among the Non-Hindus has no religious consecration; but among the Hindus most decidedly it has. Among the Non-Hindus, caste is only a practice, not a sacred institution. They did not originate it. With them it is only a survival. They do not regard caste as a religious dogma. Religion compels the Hindus to treat isolation and segregation of castes as virtue. Religion does not compel the Non-Hindus to take the same attitude towards caste. If Hindus wish to break caste, their religion will come in their way. But it will not be so in the case of Non-Hindus. It is, therefore, dangerous delusion to take comfort in the mere existence of caste among Non-Hindus, without caring to know what place caste occupies in their life and whether there are other "organic filaments," which subordinate the feeling of caste to the feeling of community. The sooner the Hindus are cured of this delusion the better. The other set denies that caste presents any problem at all for the Hindus to consider. Such Hindus seek comfort in the view that the Hindus have survived and take this as a proof of their fitness to survive. This point of view is well expressed by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan in his 'Hindu View of Life.' Referring to Hinduism he says,

"The civilization itself has not been a short lived one. Its historic records date back for over four thousand years and even then it had reached a stage of civilization, which has continued its unbroken, though at times slow and static course until the present day. It has stood the stress and strain of more than four or five millenniums of spiritual thought and experience. Though people of different races and cultures have been pouring into India from the dawn of history, Hinduism has been able to maintain its supremacy and even the proselytizing creeds backed by political power have not been able to coerce the large majority of Hindus to their views. The Hindu culture possesses some vitality, which seems to be denied to some other more forceful currents. It is no more necessary to dissect Hinduism than to open a tree to see whether the sap still runs."

The name of Prof. Radhakrishnan is big enough to invest with profundity whatever he says and impress the minds of his

readers. But I must not hesitate to speak out my mind. For, I fear that his statement may become the basis of a vicious argument that the fact of survival is proof of fitness to survive. It seems to me that the question is not whether a community lives or dies; the question is on what plane does it live. There are different modes of survival. But all are not equally honourable. For an individual as well as for society, there is a gulf between merely living and living worthily. To fight in a battle and to live in glory is one mode. To beat a retreat to surrender and to live the life of a captive is also a mode of survival. It is useless for a Hindu to take comfort in the fact that he and his people have survived. What he must consider is what the quality of their survival is. If he does that, I am sure he will cease to take pride in the mere fact of survival. A Hindu's life has been a life of continuous defeat and what appears to him to be life ever lasting is not living everlastingly but is really a life, which is perishing everlastingly. It is a mode of survival of which every right-minded Hindu, who is not afraid to own up the truth, will feel ashamed.

XX

There is no doubt, in my opinion, that unless you change your social order you can achieve little by way of progress. You cannot mobilize the community either for defence or for offence. You cannot build anything on the foundation of caste. You cannot build up a nation; you cannot build up a morality. Anything you will build on the foundations of caste will crack and will never be a whole. The only question that remains to be considered is - How to bring about the reform of the Hindu social order? How to abolish caste?⁶⁴ This is a question of supreme importance. There is a view that in the reform of caste, the first step to take is to abolish sub-castes. This view is based upon the supposition that there is a greater similarity in manners and status between sub-castes than there is between castes. I think, this is an erroneous supposition. The Brahmins of Northern and Central India are socially of lower grade, as compared with the Brahmins of the Deccan and Southern

India⁶⁵. The former are only cooks and water-carriers while the latter

occupy a high social position. On the other hand, in Northern India, the *Vaishyas* and *Kshatriyas* are intellectually and socially on a par with the Brahmins of the Deccan and Southern India.

Again, in the matter of food there is no similarity between the Brahmins of the Deccan and Southern India, who are vegetarians and the Brahmins of Kashmir and Bengal who are non-vegetarians. On the other hand, the Brahmins of the Deccan and Southern India have more in common so far as food is concerned with such non-Brahmins as the Gujaratis, Marwaris, *Banias* and Jains. There is no doubt that from the standpoint of making the transit from one caste to another easy, the fusion of the Kayasthas of Northern India and the other Non-Brahmins of Southern India with the Non-Brahmins of the Deccan and the *Dravid* country is more practicable than the fusion of the Brahmins of the South with the Brahmins of the North. But assuming that the fusion of sub-Castes is possible, what guarantee is there that the abolition of sub-Castes will necessarily lead to the abolition of Castes? On the contrary, it may happen that the process may stop with the abolition of sub-Castes. In that case, the abolition of sub-Castes will only help to strengthen the Castes and make them more powerful and therefore more mischievous. This remedy is therefore neither practicable nor effective and may easily prove to be a wrong remedy. Another plan of action for the abolition of Caste is to begin with inter-caste dinners. This also, in my opinion, is an inadequate remedy. There are many Castes, which allow inter-dinning. But it is a common experience that inter-dining has not succeeded in killing the spirit of Caste and the consciousness of Caste. I am convinced that the real remedy is inter-marriage⁶⁶. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount, the separatist feeling - the feeling of being aliens - created by Caste, will not vanish. Among the Hindus inter-marriage must necessarily be a factor of greater force in social life than it need be in the life of the non-Hindus.

Where society is already well knit by other ties, marriage is an ordinary incident of life. But where society is cut asunder,

marriage as a binding force becomes a matter of urgent necessity. The real remedy for breaking Caste is inter-marriage. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of Caste. Your *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* has adopted this line of attack. It is the direct and frontal attack, and I congratulate you upon a correct diagnosis and more upon your having shown the courage to tell the Hindus what is really wrong with them. Political tyranny is nothing compared to social tyranny and a reformer, who defies society, is a much more courageous man than a politician, who defies Government. You are right in holding that the Caste will cease to be an operative force only when inter-dining and inter-marriage have become matters of common course. You have located the source of the disease. But is your prescription the right prescription for the disease? Ask yourselves this question. Why is it that a large majority of Hindus do not inter-dine and do not inter-marry?⁶⁷ Why is it that your cause is not popular? There can be only one answer to this question and it is that inter-dining and inter-marriage are repugnant to the beliefs and dogmas, which the Hindus regard as sacred. Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of barbed wire which prevents the Hindus from co-mingling and which has, therefore, to be pulled down. Caste is a notion; it is a state of the mind. The destruction of caste does not therefore mean the destruction of physical barrier. It means a notional change. Caste may be bad. Caste may lead to conduct so gross as to be called man's inhumanity to man. All the same, it must be recognized that the Hindus observe Caste not because they are inhuman or wrong headed. They observe Caste because they are deeply religious. People are not wrong in observing Caste. In my view, what is wrong is their religion, which has inculcated this notion of Caste. If this is correct, then obviously the enemy, you must grapple with, is not the people who observe Caste, but the *Shastras*, which teach them this religion of Caste. Criticizing and ridiculing people for not inter-dining or inter-marrying or occasionally holding inter-caste dinners and celebrating inter-caste marriages, is a futile

method of achieving the desired end. The real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the *Shastras*. How do you

expect to succeed, if you allow the *Shastras* to continue to mould the belief and opinions of the people? Not to question the authority of the *Shastras*, to permit the people to believe in their sanctity and their sanctions and to blame them and to criticize them for their acts as being irrational and inhuman is a incongruous way of carrying on social reform. Reformers working for the removal of untouchability including Gandhi, do not seem to realize that the acts of the people are merely the results of their beliefs inculcated upon their minds by the *Shastras* and that people will not change their conduct until they cease to believe in the sanctity of the *Shastras* on which their conduct is founded. No wonder that such efforts have not produced any results. You also seem to be erring in the same way as the reformers working in the cause of removing untouchability. To agitate for and to organize inter-caste dinners and inter-caste marriages is like forced feeding brought about by artificial means. Make every man and woman free from the thralldom of the *Shastras*, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the *Shastras*, and he or she will inter-dine and inter-marry, without your telling him or her to do so. It is no use seeking refuge in quibbles. It is no use telling people that the *Shastras* do not say what they are believed to say, grammatically read or logically interpreted. What matters is how the people have understood the *Shastras*. As you must take the stand that Buddha took. You must take the stand, which Guru Nanak took. You must not only discard the *Shastras*, you must deny their authority, as did Buddha and Nanak. You must have courage to tell the Hindus, that what is wrong with them is their religion - the religion, which has produced in them this notion of the sacredness of Caste. Will you show that courage?⁶⁸

XXI

What are your chances of success? Social reforms fall into different species. There is a species of reform, which does not relate to the religious notion of people but is purely secular in

character. There is also a species of reform, which relates to the religious notions of people. Of such a species reform, there are

two varieties. In one, the reform accords with the principles of the religion and merely invites people, who have departed from it, to revert to them and to follow them. The second is a reform which not only touches the religious principles but is diametrically opposed to those principles and invites people to depart from and to discard their authority and to act contrary to those principles. Caste is the natural outcome of certain religious beliefs, which have the sanction of the *Shastras*, which are believed to contain the command of divinely inspired sages who were endowed with a supernatural wisdom and whose commands, therefore, cannot be disobeyed without committing sin. The destruction of Caste is a reform, which falls under the third category. To ask people to give up Caste is to ask them to go contrary to their fundamental religious notions. It is obvious that the first and second species of reform are easy. But the third is a stupendous task, well nigh impossible. The Hindus hold to the sacredness of the social order. Caste has divine bases. You must therefore destroy the sacredness and divinity with which Caste has become invested. In the last analysis, this means you must destroy the authority of the *Shastras* and the Vedas.

I have emphasized this question of the ways and means of destroying Caste, because I think that knowing the proper ways and means is more important than knowing the ideal. If you do not know the real ways and means, all your shots are sure to be misfires. If my analysis is correct then your task is Herculean, which will not be easy, if not impossible to accomplish. You alone can say whether you are capable of achieving it. Speaking for myself, I see the task to be well nigh impossible. Perhaps you would like to know why I think so. Out of the many reason, which have led me to take this view, I will mention some, which I regard much important. One of the reasons is the attitude of hostility, which the Brahmins have shown towards this question. The Brahmins form the vanguard of the movement for political reform and in some cases also of economic reform. But they are not to be found even as camp-

followers in the army raised to break down the barricades of Caste. Is there any hope of the Brahmins ever taking up a lead in

the future in this matter? I say no. You may ask why? You may argue that there is no reason why Brahmins should continue to shun social reform. You may argue that the Brahmins know that the bane of Hindu Society is Caste and as an enlightened class could not be expected to be indifferent to its consequences. You may argue that there are secular Brahmins and priestly Brahmins and if the latter do not take up the cudgels on behalf of those who want to break Caste, the former will. All this of course sounds very plausible. But in all this it is forgotten that the break up of the Caste system is bound to affect adversely the Brahmin Caste. Having regard to this, it is reasonable to expect that the Brahmins will ever consent to lead a movement the ultimate result of which is to destroy the power and prestige of the Brahmin Caste? Is it reasonable to expect the secular Brahmins to take part in a movement directed against the priestly Brahmins? In my judgment, it is useless to make a distinction between the secular Brahmins and priestly Brahmins. Both are kith and kin. They are two arms of the same body and one bound to fight for the existence of the other. In this connection, I am reminded of some very pregnant remarks made by Prof. Dicey⁶⁹ in his 'English Constitution'. Speaking of the actual limitation on the legislative supremacy of Parliament, Dicey says:

"The actual exercise of authority by any sovereign whatever, and notably by Parliament, is bounded or controlled by two limitations. Of those the one is an external, and the other is an internal limitation. The external limit to the real power of a sovereign consists in the possibility or certainty that his subject or a large number of them will disobey or resist his law...the internal limit to the exercise of sovereignty arises from the nature of the sovereign power itself. Even a despot exercises his power in accordance with his character, which is itself moulded by the circumstance under which he lives, including under that head the moral feelings of the time and the society to which he belongs. The Sultan could not, if he would, change the religion of the Mohammedan world, but even if he could do so, it is in the very

highest degree improbable that the head of Mohammedanism should wish to overthrow the religion of Mohammed; the

internal check on the exercise of the Sultan's power is at least as strong as the external limitation. People sometimes ask the ideal question, why the Pope does not introduce this or that reform? The true answer is that a revolutionist is not the kind of man who becomes a Pope and that a man who becomes a Pope has no wish to be a revolutionist."

I think, the above remarks apply equally to the Brahmins of India and one can say with equal truth that if a man who becomes a Pope has no wish to become a revolutionary, a man who is born a Brahmin has much less desire to become a revolutionary. Indeed, to expect a Brahmin to be a revolutionary in matters of social reform is as idle as to expect the British Parliament, as was said by Leslie Stephen⁷⁰, to pass an Act requiring all blue-eyed babies to be murdered.

Some of you will say that it is a matter of small concern whether the Brahmins come forward to lead the movement against Caste or whether they do not. To take this view is in my judgment to ignore the part played by the intellectual class in the community. Whether you accept the theory of the great man as the maker of history or whether you do not, this much you will have to concede that in every country the intellectual class is the most influential class, if not the governing class. The intellectual class is the class, which can foresee, it is the class, which can advise and give lead. In no country does the mass of the people live the life of intelligent thought and action. It is largely imitative and follows the intellectual class. There is no exaggeration in saying that the entire destiny of a country depends upon its intellectual class. If the intellectual class is honest, independent and disinterested, it can be trusted to take the initiative and give a proper lead when a crisis arises. It is true that intellect by itself is no virtue. It is only a means and the use of means depends upon the ends, which an intellectual person pursues. An intellectual man can be a good man but he can easily be a rogue. Similarly an intellectual class may be a band of high-souled persons, ready to help, ready to emancipate erring humanity or it may easily be

a gang of crooks or a body of advocates of a narrow clique from which it draws its support. You may think it a pity that the

intellectual class in India is simple another name for the Brahmin caste. You may regret that the two are one; that the existence of the intellectual class should be bound with one single caste, that this intellectual class should share the interest and the aspirations of that Brahmin caste, which has regarded itself the custodian of the interest of that caste, rather than of the interests of the country. All this may prove to be very regrettable. But the fact remains, that the Brahmins form the intellectual class of the Hindus. It is not only an intellectual class but it is a class, which is held in great reverence by the rest of the Hindus. The Hindus are taught that the Brahmins are *Bhudeva*. वर्णनाम् ब्राह्मणः । गुरुः । The Hindus are taught that Brahmins alone can be their teachers. Manu says, "If it be asked how it should be with respect to points of the Dharma which have not been specially mentioned, the answer is that which Brahmins who are *Shishthas* propound shall doubtless have legal force."

अनाम्नातेषु धर्मेषु कथं स्यादिति चेद्भवेत् ।

यं शिष्टा ब्राह्मणा ब्रूयुः स धर्मः स्यादशङ्कितः ।

When such an intellectual class, which holds the rest of the community in its grip, is opposed to the reform of Caste, the chances of success in a movement for the break-up of the Caste System appear to me very, very remote.

The second reason, why I say the task is impossible, will be clear if you will bear in mind that the Caste System has two aspects. In one of its aspects, it divides men into separate communities. In its second aspect, it places these communities in a graded order one above the other in social status. Each Caste takes the pride and its consolation in the fact that in the scale of castes it is above some other caste. As an outward mark of this gradation, there is also a gradation of social and religious rights technically spoken of as *Ashtadhikaras* and *Sanskaras*. The higher the grade of a caste, the greater the number of these rights and the lower the grade, the lesser the rights it can attain. Now this gradation, this scaling of castes, makes it impossible to organize a common front against the Caste System. If a caste

claims the right to inter-dine and inter-marry with another caste placed above it, it is frozen, instantly it is told by mischief-

mongers, and there are many Brahmins amongst such mischief-mongers, that it will have to concede inter-dining and inter-marriage with castes below it! All are slaves of the Caste System. But all the slaves are not equal in status. To excite the proletariat to bring about an economic revolution, Karl Marx⁷¹ told them: "You have nothing to lose except your chains." But the artful way, in which the social and religious rights are distributed among the different castes whereby some have more and some have less, makes the slogan of Karl Marx quite useless to excite the Hindus against the Caste System. Castes form a graded system of sovereignties, high and low, which are jealous of their status and which know that if a general dissolution came, some of them stand to lose more of their prestige and power than others do. You cannot, therefore, have a general mobilization of the Hindus, to use a military expression, for an attack on the Caste System.⁷²

XXII

Can you appeal to reason and ask the Hindus to discard Caste as being contrary to reason? That raises the question: Is a Hindu free to follow his reason? Manu has laid down three sanctions to which every Hindu must conform in the matter of his behaviour.

वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः

Here there is no place for reason to play its part. A Hindu must follow Veda, *Smriti* or *Sadachar*. He cannot follow anything else. In the first place how are the texts of the Vedas and *Smritis* to be interpreted whenever any doubt arises regarding their meaning? On this important question the view of Manu is quite definite. He says:

योज्यमन्येत ते मूले हेतुशस्त्राश्रयात् द्विजः ।

स साधुभिर्बहिष्कार्यो नास्तिको वेदनिन्दकः ॥

According to this rule, rationalism as a canon of interpreting the Vedas and *Smritis* is absolutely condemned. It is regarded to be as wicked as atheism and punishment provided for it is ex-communication. Thus, where the Veda or the *Smriti*

covers a matter, a Hindu cannot resort to rational thinking. Even when there is a conflict between Vedas and *Smritis* on matters on

which they have given a positive injunction, the solution is not left to reason. When there is a conflict between two *Shrutis*, both are to be regarded as of equal authority. Either of them may be followed. NO attempt is to be made to find out which of the two accords with reason. Manu makes this clear:

श्रुतिद्वैधं तु यत्र स्यात्तत्र धर्मावुभौ स्मृतौ ।

"When there is a conflict between *Shruti* and *Smriti*, the *Shruti* must prevail."

But here too, no attempt must be made to find out which of the two accords with reason. Manu lays this down in the following *Shloka*:

या वेदवाह्याः स्मृतयो याश्च काश्च कुदृष्टः ।

सर्वास्ता निष्फलाः प्रेत्य तमोनिष्ठा हि तः स्मृताः ॥

Again, when there is a conflict between two *Smritis*, the *Manu-Smriti* must prevail, but no attempt is to be made to find which of the two accords with reason. This is the ruling given by *Brihaspati*:

वेदायत्वोपनिबन्धत्वत् प्रमाण्यं हि मनोः स्मृतं ।

मन्वर्थविपरीता तु या स्मृतिः सा न शस्यते ॥

It is, therefore, clear that in any matter on which the *Shrutis* and *Smritis* have given a positive direction, a Hindu is not free to use his reasoning faculty. The same rule is laid down in the *Mahabharat*:

पुराणं मानवो धर्मः सांगो वेदश्चिकित्सितं ।

आज्ञासिद्धानि चत्वारि न हन्तव्यानि हेतुभिः ॥

He must abide by their directions. The Caste and *Varna* are matters, which are dealt with by the Vedas and the *Smritis* and consequently, appeal to reason can have no effect on a Hindu. So far as Caste and *Varna* are concerned, not only the *Shastras* do not permit the Hindu to use his reason in the decision of the question, but also they have taken care to see that no occasion is left to examine in a rational way the foundations of his belief in

Caste and *Varna*. It must be a source of silent amusement to many a Non-Hindus to find hundreds and thousands of Hindus

breaking Caste on certain occasions⁷³, such as railway journey and foreign travel and yet endeavouring to maintain Caste for the rest of their lives! The explanation of this phenomenon discloses another fetter on the reasoning faculties of the Hindus. Man's life is generally habitual and unreflective.

Reflective thought, in the sense of active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form or knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends, is quite rare and arises only in a situation which presents a dilemma - a crisis. Railway journeys and foreign travels are really occasions of crisis in the life of a Hindu and it is natural to expect a Hindu to ask himself why he should maintain Caste at all, if he cannot maintain it at all times. But he does not. He breaks Caste at one step and proceeds to observe it at the next without raising any question. The reason for this astonishing conduct is to be found in the rule of the *Shastras*, which directs him to maintain Caste as far as possible and to undergo *prayaschitta*, the *Shastras* by following a spirit of compromise have given Caste a perpetual lease of life and have smothered reflective thought which would have otherwise led to the destruction of the notion of Caste.

There have been many who have worked in the cause of the abolition of Caste and Untouchability. Of those, who can be mentioned, Ramanuja⁷⁴, Kabir⁷⁵, and others stand out prominently. Can you appeal to the acts of these reformers and exhort the Hindus to follow them? It is true that Manu has included *Sadachar* (मदाचार) as one of the sanctions along with *Shruti* and *Smriti*. Indeed, *Sadachar* has been given a higher place than *Shastras*:

यद्यदाचर्यते येन धर्म्यं वाऽधर्म्यमेव वा ।

देशस्याचरणं नित्यं चरित्रं तद्विकीर्तितम् ॥

According to this, *Sadachar*, whether, it is धर्म्य or अधर्म्य in accordance with *Shastras* or contrary to *Shastras*, must be followed. But what is the meaning of *Sadachar*? If any one were to suppose that *Sadachar* means right or good acts i.e. acts of

good and righteous men he would find himself greatly mistaken. *Sadachar* does not mean good acts or acts of good men. It means

ancient custom good or bad. The following verse makes this clear:

As though to warn people against the view that *Sadachar*, good acts or acts of good men and fearing that people might understand it that way and follow the acts of good men, the *Smritis* have commanded the Hindus in unmistakable terms not to follow even Gods in their good deeds, if they are contrary to *Shruti*, *Smriti* and *Sadachar*. This may sound to be most extraordinary, most perverse, but the fact remains that न देवचरितं चरेत् is an injunction, issued to the Hindus by their *Shastras*. Reason and morality are the two most powerful weapons in the armoury of a Reformer. To deprive him of the use of these weapons is to disable him for action. How are you going to break up Caste, if people are not free to consider whether it accords with reason? How are you going to break up Caste if people are not free to consider whether it accords with morality? The wall built around Caste is impregnable and the material, of which it is built, contains none of the combustible stuff of reason and morality. Add to this the fact that inside this wall stands the army of Brahmins, who form the intellectual class, Brahmins who are the natural leaders of the Hindus, Brahmins who are there not as mere mercenary soldiers but as army fighting for its homeland and you will get an idea why I think that breaking-up of Caste amongst the Hindus is well-nigh impossible. At any rate, it would take ages before a breach is made. But whether the doing of the deed takes time or whether it can be done quickly, you must not forget that if you wish to bring about a breach in the system then you have got to apply the dynamite to the Vedas and the *Shastras*, which deny any part to reason, to Vedas and *Shastras*, which deny any part to morality. You must destroy the religion of the *Shruti* and the *Smriti*. Nothing else will avail. This is my considered view of the matter.⁷⁶

XXIII

Some may not understand what I mean by destruction of

Religion; some may find the idea revolting to them and some may find it revolutionary. Let me therefore explain my position.

I do not know whether you draw a distinction between principles and rules. But I do. Not only I make a distinction but also I say that this distinction is real and important. Rules are practical; they are habitual ways of doing things according to prescription. But principles are intellectual; they are useful methods of judging things. Rules seek to tell an agent just what course of action to pursue. Principles do not prescribe a specific course of action. Rules, like cooking recipes, do tell just what to do and how to do to it. A principle, such as that of justice, supplies a main head by reference to which he is to consider the bearing of his desires and purposes, it guides him in his thinking by suggesting to him the important consideration which he should bear in mind. This difference between rules and principles makes the act done in pursuit of them different in quality and in content. Doing what is said to be good by virtue of a rule and doing well in the light of a principle are two different things. The principle may be wrong but the act is conscious and responsible. The rule may be right but the act is mechanical. A religious act may not be a correct act but must at least be a responsible act. To permit of this responsibility, Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules it ceases to be Religion, as it kills responsibility, which is the essence of a truly religious act. What is this Hindu Religion? Is it a set of principles or is it a code of rules? Now the Hindu Religion, as contained in the Vedas and the *Smritis*, is nothing but a mass of sacrificial, social, political and sanitary rules and regulations, all mixed up. What the Hindus call Religion is nothing but a multitude of commands and prohibitions. Religion, in the sense of spiritual principles, truly universal, applicable to all races, to all countries, to all times, is not to be found in them, and if it is, it does not form the governing part of a Hindu's life. That for a Hindu, Dharma means commands and prohibitions is clear from the way the word Dharma is used in Vedas and the *Smritis* and understood by the commentators. The word Dharma as used in the Vedas in

most cases means religious ordinances or rites. Even Jaimini⁷⁷ in his Purva-Mimansa defines Dharma as "a desirable goal or result

that is indicated by injunctive (*Vedic*) passages". To put it in plain language, what the Hindus call Religion is really Law or at best legalized class-ethics. Frankly, I refuse to call this code of ordinances, as religion. The first evil of such a code of ordinances, misrepresented to the people as Religion, is that it tends to deprive moral life of freedom and spontaneity and to reduce it (for the conscientious at any rate) to a more or less anxious and servile conformity to externally imposed rules. Under it, there is no loyalty to ideals; there is only conformity to commands. But the worst evil of this code of ordinances is that the laws it contains must be the same yesterday, today and forever. They are iniquitous in that they are not the same for one class as for another. But this iniquity is made perpetual in that they are prescribed to be the same for all generations. The objectionable part of such a scheme is not that certain persons called Prophets or Lawgivers make them. The objectionable part is that this code has been invested with the character of finality and fixity. Happiness notoriously varies with the conditions and circumstances of a person, as well as with the conditions of different people and epochs. That being the case, how can humanity endure this code of eternal laws, without being cramped and without being crippled? I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that such a religion must be destroyed and I say, there is nothing irreligious in working for the destruction of such a religion. Indeed I hold that it is your bounden duty to tear the mask, to remove the misrepresentation that is caused by misnaming this Law as Religion. This is an essential step for you. Once you clear the minds of the people of this misconception and enable them to realize that what they are told as Religion is not Religion but that it is really Law, you will be in a position to urge for its amendment or abolition. So long as people look upon it as Religion they will not be ready for a change, because the idea of Religion is generally speaking not associated with the idea of change. But the idea of law is associated with the idea of change and when people come to

know that what is called Religion is really Law, old and archaic, they will be ready for a change, for people know and accept that

law can be changed.

XXIV

While I condemn a Religion of Rules, I must not be understood to hold the opinion that there is no necessity for a religion. On the contrary, I agree with Burke⁷⁸ when he says, "True religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true Civil Government rests, and both their sanction."

Consequently, when I urge that these ancient rules of life be annulled, I am anxious that a Religion of Principles, which alone can lay claim to being a true Religion, shall take its place. Indeed, I am so convinced of the necessity of Religion that I feel I ought to tell you in outline what I regard as necessary item in this religious reform. The following in my opinion should be the cardinal items in this reform:

(1) There should be one and only one standard book of Hindu Religion, acceptable to all Hindus and recognized by all Hindus. This of course means that all other books of Hindu religion such as Vedas, *Shastras* and *Puranas*, which are treated as sacred and authoritative, must by law cease to be so and the preaching of any doctrine, religious or social contained in these books should be penalized.

(2) It should be better if priesthood among Hindus is abolished. But as it seems to be impossible, the priesthood must at least cease to be hereditary⁷⁹. Every person who professes to be a Hindu must be eligible for being a priest. By law, no Hindu should be entitled to be a priest unless he has passed an examination prescribed by the States and holds a *Sanad*⁸⁰ from the State, permitting him to practice.

(3) No ceremony performed by a priest who does not hold a *sanad* shall be deemed to be valid in law and it should be made penal for a person who has no *sanad* to officiate as a priest.

(4) A priest should be the servant of the State and should be subject to the disciplinary action by the State in the matter of his morals, beliefs and worship, in addition to his being subject along with other citizens to the ordinary law of the land.

(5) The number of priests should be limited by the law according to the requirements of the State as is done in the case of I.C.S. To some, it may sound radical. But to my mind there is nothing revolutionary in this. Every profession in India is regulated. Engineers must show proficiency, Doctors must show proficiency, Lawyers must show proficiency, before they are allowed to practice their professions. During the whole of their career, they must not only obey the law of the land, civil as well as criminal, but they must also obey the special code of morals prescribed by their respective professions. The priest's is the only profession where proficiency is not required. The profession of a Hindu priest is the only profession, which is not subject to any code. Mentally a priest may be an idiot, physically a priest may be suffering from a foul disease, such as syphilis or gonorrhea, and morally he may be a wreck. But he is fit to officiate at solemn ceremonies, to enter the sanctum sanctorum of a Hindu temple and worship the Hindu God. All this becomes possible among the Hindus because for a priest it is enough to be born in a priestly caste. The whole thing is abominable and is due to the fact that the priestly class among Hindus is subject neither to law nor to morality. It recognizes no duties. It knows only of rights and privileges. It is a pest which divinity seems to have let loose on the masses for their mental and moral degradation. The priestly class must be brought under control by some legislation as I have outlined above. It will prevent it from doing mischief and from misguiding people. It will democratize it by throwing it open to every one. It will certainly help to kill the Brahmanism and will also help to kill Caste, which is nothing but Brahmanism incarnate. Brahmanism is the poison, which has spoiled Hinduism. You will succeed in saving Hinduism if you will kill Brahmanism⁸¹. There should be no opposition to this reform from any quarter. Even the *Arya Samajists* should welcome it, because this is merely an application of their own doctrine of *guna-karma*.

Whether you do that or you do not, you must give a new

doctrinal basis to your Religion - a basis that will be in consonance with Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, in short, with

Democracy. I am no authority on the subject. But I am told that for such religious principles as will be in consonance with Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, it may not be necessary for you to borrow from foreign sources and that you could draw for such principles on the Upanishads. Whether you could do so without a complete remoulding, a considerable scraping and chipping off the ore they contain, is more than I can say. This means a complete change in the fundamental notions of life. It means a complete change in the values of life. It means a complete change in outlook and in attitude towards men and things. It means conversion; but if you do not like the word, I will say, it means new life. But a new life cannot enter a body that is dead. New life can enter only in a new body. The old body must die before a new body can come into existence and a new life can enter into it. To put it simple, the old must cease to be operative before the new can begin to enliven and to pulsate. This is what I meant when I said you must discard the authority of the *Shastras* and destroy the religion of the *Shastras*.

XXV

I have kept you too long. It is time I brought this address to a close. This would have been a convenient point for me to stop. But this would probably be my last address to a Hindu audience on a subject vitally concerning the Hindus. I would therefore like, before I close, to place before the Hindus, if they will allow me, some questions, which I regard as vital and invite them seriously to consider the same.

In the first place, the Hindus must consider whether it is sufficient to take the placid view of the anthropologist that there is nothing to be said about the belief, habits, morals and outlook on life, which obtain among the different peoples of the world except that they often differ; or whether it is not necessary to make an attempt to find what kind of morality, beliefs, habits and outlook have worked best and have enabled those who possessed them to flourish, to go strong, to people the earth and

to have dominion over it. Professor Carver observes⁸² "morality and religion" as the organized expression of moral approval and

disapproval must be regarded as factors in the struggle for existence as truly as are weapons for offence and defence, teeth and claws, horns and hoofs, fur and feathers. The social group, community, tribe or nation, which develops an unworkable scheme of morality or within which those social acts which weaken it and unfit it for survival, habitually create the sentiment of approval, while those which would strengthen and enable it to be expanded habitually create the sentiment of disapproval, will eventually be eliminated. It is its habits of approval or disapproval (these are the results of religion and morality) that handicap it, as really as the possession of two wings on one side with none on the other will handicap the colony of flies. It would be as futile in the one case as in the other to argue, that one system is just as good as another." Morality and religion, therefore, are not mere matters of like and dislikes. You may dislike exceedingly a scheme of morality, which, if universally practiced within a nation, would make that nation the strongest nation on the face of the earth. Yet in spite of your dislike such a nation will become strong. You may like exceedingly a scheme of morality and an ideal of justice, which if universally practiced within a nation, would make it unable to hold its own in the struggle with other nations. Yet in spite of your admiration this nation will eventually disappear. The Hindus must, therefore, examine their religion and their morality in terms of their survival value.

Secondly, the Hindus must consider whether they should conserve the whole of their social heritage or select what is helpful and transmit to future generations only that much and no more. Prof. John Dewey⁸³ who was my teacher and to whom I owe so much, has said:

"Every society gets encumbered with what is trivial, with dead wood from the past, and with what is positively perverse....As a society becomes more enlightened, it realizes that it is responsible not to conserve and transmit the whole of its

existing achievements but only such as make for a better future society." Even Burke, in spite of the vehemence with which he

opposed the principle of change embodied in the French Revolution, was compelled to admit,

"A State without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation. Without such means it might even risk the loss of that part of the constitution which it wished the most religiously to preserve." What Burke said of a State applies equally to a society.

Thirdly, the Hindus must consider whether they must not cease to worship the past as supplying its ideals. Prof. Dewey best sums up the baneful effect of this worship of the past when he says: "An individual can live only in the present. The present is not just something, which comes after the past; much less something produced by it. It is what life is in leaving the past behind it. The study of past products will not help us to understand the present. Knowledge of the past and its heritage is of great significance when it enters into the present, but not otherwise. And the mistake of making the records and remains of the past the main material of education is that it tends to make the past a rival of the present and the present a more or less futile imitation of the past." The principle, which makes little of the present act of living and growing, naturally looks upon the present as empty and upon the future as remote. Such a principle is inimical to progress and is a hindrance to a strong and a steady current of life.

Fourthly, the Hindus must consider whether the time has not come for them to recognize that there is nothing fixed, nothing eternal, nothing *sanatan*; that everything is changing, that change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society. In a changing society, there must be a constant revolution of old values⁸⁴ and the Hindus must realize that if there must be standards to measure the acts of men, there must also be a readiness to revise those standards.

XXVI

I have to confess that this address has become too lengthy. Whether this fault is compensated to any extent by

breadth or depth is a matter for you to judge. All I claim is to have told you candidly my views. I have little to recommend them but some study and a deep concern in your destiny. If you will allow me to say, these views are the views of a man, who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness. They come from one, almost the whole of whose public exertion has been one continuous struggle for liberty for the poor and for the oppressed and whose only reward has been a continuous shower of calumny and abuse from national journals and national leaders, for no other reason except that I refuse to join with them in performing the miracle - I will not say trick- of liberating the oppressed with the gold of the tyrant and raising the poor with the cash of the rich. All this may not be enough to commend my views. I think they are not likely to alter yours. But whether they do or do not, the responsibility is entirely yours. You must make your efforts to uproot Caste, if not in my way, then in your way. I am sorry I will not be with you. I have decided to change. This is not the first place for giving reasons. But even when I am gone out of your fold, I will watch your movement with active sympathy and you will have my assistance for what it may be worth. Yours is a national cause. Caste is no doubt primarily the breath of the Hindus. But the Hindus have fouled the air all over and everybody is infected, Sikh, Muslim and Christian. You therefore, deserve the support of all those who are suffering from this infection, Sikh, Muslim and Christian. Yours is more difficult than the other national cause, namely *Swaraj*. In the fight for *Swaraj* you fight with the whole nation on your side. In this, you have to fight against the whole nation and that too, your own. But it is more important than *Swaraj*. There is no use having *Swaraj*, if you cannot defend it. More important than the question of defending *Swaraj* is the question of defending the Hindus under the *Swaraj*. In my opinion only when the Hindu

Society becomes a casteless society that it can hope to have strength enough to defend itself. Without such internal strength, *Swaraj* for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery. Good-bye and good wishes for your success.

APPENDIX - I

A VINDICATION OF CASTE BY MR. GANDHI
(A Reprint of his Article in his mouthpiece The 'Harijan')

Dr. Ambedkar's Indictment.

The readers will recall the fact that Dr. Ambedkar was to have presided last May at the annual conference of the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* of Lahore. But the conference itself was cancelled because Dr. Ambedkar's address was found to be unacceptable by the Reception Committee.

How far a Reception Committee is justified in rejecting a President of its choice because of his address that may be objectionable to it is open to question. The Committee knew Dr. Ambedkar's views on Caste and the Hindus scriptures. They knew also that he had in unequivocal terms decided to give up Hinduism. Nothing less than the address that Dr. Ambedkar had prepared was to be expected from him. The committee appears to have deprived the public of an opportunity of listening to the original views of a man, who has carved out for himself a unique position in society. Whatever label he wears in future, Dr. Ambedkar is not the man to allow himself to be forgotten.

Dr. Ambedkar was not going to be beaten by the Reception Committee. He has answered their rejection of him by publishing the address at his own expense. He has priced it at 8 *annas*; I would suggest a reduction to 2 or at most 4 *annas*.

No reformer can ignore the address. The orthodox will gain by reading it. This is not to say that the address is not open to objection. It has to be read only because it is open to serious objection. Dr. Ambedkar is a challenge to Hinduism. Brought up as a Hindu, educated by a Hindu potentate⁸⁵, he has become so disgusted with the so-called *Savarna* Hindus⁸⁶ for the treatment that he and his people have received at their hands that he

proposes to leave not only them but the very religion that is his and their common heritage. He has transferred to that religion, his disgust against a part of its professors.

But this is not to be wondered at. After all, one can only

judge a system or an institution by the conduct of its representatives. What is more? Dr. Ambedkar found that the vast majority of *Savarna* Hindus had not only conducted themselves inhumanly against those of their fellow religionists, whom they classed as untouchables, but they had based their conduct on the authority of their scriptures, and when he began to search them he had found ample warrant for their belief in untouchability and all its implications. The author of the address has quoted chapter and verse in proof of his three-fold indictment-inhuman conduct itself, the unabashed justification for it on the part of the perpetrators, and the subsequent discovery that their scriptures warranted the justification.

No Hindu who prizes his faith above life itself can afford to underrate the importance of this indictment. Dr. Ambedkar is not alone in his disgust. He is its most uncompromising exponent and one of the ablest among them. He is certainly the most irreconcilable among them. Thank God, in the front rank of leaders, he is singularly alone and as yet but a representative of a very small minority. But many leaders belonging to the depressed classes voice what he says with more or less vehemence. Only the latter, for instance Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah and Dewan Bahadur Srinivasan, not only do not threaten to give up Hinduism but find enough warmth in it to compensate for the shameful persecution to which the vast mass of *Harijans* are exposed.⁸⁷

But the fact of many leaders remaining in the Hindu fold is no warrant for disregarding what Dr. Ambedkar has to say. The *Savarnas* have to correct their belief and their conduct. Above all those who are by their learning and influence among the *Savarnas* have to give an authoritative interpretation of the scriptures. The questions that Dr. Ambedkar's indictment suggest are:

- (1). What are the scriptures?
- (2). Are all the printed texts to be regarded as an integral part of them or is any part of them to be rejected as unauthorized interpolations?
- (3). What is the answer of such accepted and expurgated

scriptures on the question of untouchability, castes, equality of status, inter-dining and intermarriages? (Dr. Ambedkar has examined all these in his address.) I must reserve for the next issue my own answer to these questions and a statement of the (at least some) manifest flaws in Dr. Ambedkar's thesis.

(*The Harijan* – A mouthpiece of Mr. Gandhi),

July 11, 1936

II

The *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Smritis* and *Puranas* including *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are the Hindu Scriptures. Nor is this a finite list. Every age or even generation has added to the list. It follows, therefore, that everything printed or even found handwritten is not scripture. The *Smritis* for instance contain much that can never be accepted as the word of God. Thus, many of the texts that Dr. Ambedkar quotes from the *Smritis* cannot be accepted as authentic. The scriptures, properly so-called, can only be concerned with eternal varieties and must appeal to any conscience i.e. any heart whose eyes of understanding are opened. Nothing can be accepted as the word of God which cannot be tested by reason or be capable of being spiritually experienced. And even when you have an expurgated edition of the scriptures, you will need their interpretation. Who is the best interpreter? Not learned men surely. Learning there must be. But religion does not live by it. It lives in the experiences of its saints and seers, in their lives and sayings. When all the most learned commentators of the scriptures are utterly forgotten, the accumulated experience of the sages and saints will abide and be an inspiration for ages to come.⁸⁸

Caste had nothing to do with religion. It is custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know that it is harmful both to

spiritual and national growth. *Varna* and *Ashrama* are institutions, which have nothing to do with caste. The law of *Varna* teaches us that we have each one of us to earn our bread by following the ancestral calling. It defines not our rights but our duties. It necessarily has reference to callings that are

conducive to the welfare of humanity and to no other. It also follows that there is no calling too low nor-too high. All are good, lawful and absolutely equal in status. The ancestral callings of a Brahmin, spiritual teacher and a scavenger are equal, and their due performance carries equal merit before God and at one time seems to have carried identical reward before man. Both were entitled to their livelihood and no more. Indeed one traces even now in the villages the faint lines of this healthy operation of the law. Living in Segaoon with its population of 600, I do not find a great disparity between the earnings of different tradesmen including Brahmins.⁸⁹ I find too that real Brahmins are to be found even in these degenerate days who are living on alms freely given to them and are giving freely of what they have of spiritual treasures.

It would be wrong and improper to judge the law of *Varna* by its caricature in the lives of men who profess to belong to a *Varna*, whilst they openly commit a breach of its only operative rule. Arrogation of a superior status by and of the *Varna* over another is a denial of the law. And there is nothing in the law of *Varna* to warrant a belief in untouchability. (The essence of Hinduism is contained in its enunciation of one and the only God as Truth and its bold acceptance of *Ahimsa* as the law of the human family.)

I am aware that many besides Dr. Ambedkar will dispute my interpretation of Hinduism. That does not affect my position. It is an interpretation by which I have lived for nearly half a century and according to which I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to regulate my life.

In my opinion the profound mistake that Dr. Ambedkar has made in his address is to pick out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they so woefully misrepresent.

Judged by the standard applied by Dr. Ambedkar, every known living faith will probably fail.

In his able address, the learned Doctor has over-proved his case. Can a religion that was professed by Chaitanya, Jnyandeo, Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar, Ramkrishan Paramhansa, Raja

Ram Mohan Rao, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Vivekanand and host of others who might be easily mentioned, so utterly devoid of merit as is made out in Dr. Ambedkar's address?

A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. For that and that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve upon.

The Harijan, A mouthpiece of Mr. Gandhi.)

July 18, 1936

III

VARNA VERSUS CASTE⁹⁰

Shri Sant Ramji of the *Jat-pat-torak Mandal* of Lahore wants me to publish the following:

"I have read your remarks about Dr. Ambedkar and the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal*, Lahore. In that connection I beg to submit as follows:

"We did not invite Dr. Ambedkar to preside over our conference because he belonged to the Depressed Classes, for we do not distinguish between a touchable and an untouchable Hindu. On the contrary our choice fell on him simply because his diagnosis of the fatal disease of the Hindu community was the same as ours, i.e. he too was of the opinion that caste system was the root cause of the disruption and downfall of the Hindus.

The subject of the Doctor's thesis for Doctorate being caste system, he has studied the subject thoroughly. Now the object of our conference was to persuade the Hindus to annihilate caste but the advice of a non-Hindu in social and religious matters can have no effect on them. The Doctor in the supplementary portion of his address insisted on saying that that was his last speech as a Hindu, which was irrelevant as well as pernicious to the interests of the conference. So we requested him to expunge that sentence for he could easily say the same

thing on any other occasion. But he refused and we saw no utility in making merely a show of our function. In spite of all this, I cannot help praising his address, which is, as far as I know, the most learned thesis on the subject and worth

translating into every vernacular of India.

Moreover, I want to bring to your notice that your philosophical difference between Caste and *Varna* is too subtle to be grasped by people in general, because for all practical purposes in the Hindu society Caste and *Vanra* are one and the same thing, for the function of both of them is one and the same i.e. to restrict inter-caste marriages and inter-dining. Your theory of *Varnavyavastha* is impracticable in this age and there is no hope of its revival in the near future. But Hindus are slaves of caste and do not want to destroy it. So when you advocate your ideal of imaginary *Varnavyavastha* they find justification for clinging to caste. Thus you are going a great disservice to social reform by advocating your imaginary utility of division of *Varna*, for it creates hindrance in our way. To try to remove untouchability without striking at the root of *Varnavyastha* is simply to treat the outward symptoms of a disease or to draw a line on the surface of water. As in the heart of their hearts *dvijas* do not want to give social equality to the so-called touchable and untouchable *Shudras*; so they refuse to break caste, and give liberal donation for the removal of untouchability, simply to evade the issue. **To seek the help of the *Shastras* for the removal of untouchability and caste is simply to wash mud with mud."**

MR. GANDHI'S ANSWER.

The last paragraph of the letter surely cancels the first. If the *Mandal* rejects the help of the *Shastras*, they do exactly what Dr. Ambedkar does, i.e. cease to be Hindus. How then can they object to Dr. Ambedkar's address merely because he said that that was his last speech as a Hindu? The position appears to be wholly untenable especially when the *Mandal*, for which Shri Sant Ram claims to speak, applauds the whole argument of Dr.

Ambedkar's address.

But it is pertinent to ask what the *Mandal* believes if it rejects the *Shastras*? How can a Muslim remain one if he rejects the Quran, or a Christian remains Christian if he rejects the Bible? If Caste and *Varna* are convertible terms and if *Varna* is

an integral part of the *Shastras* which define Hinduism, I do not know how a person who rejects Caste i.e. *Varna* can call himself a Hindu.⁹¹

Shri Sant Ram likens the *Shastras* to mud. Dr. Ambedkar has not, so far as I remember, given any such picturesque name to the *Shastras*. I have certainly meant when I have said that if *Shastras* support the existing untouchability I should cease to call myself a Hindu. Similarly, if the *Shastras* support caste, as we know it today in all its hideousness, I may not call myself or remain a Hindu since I have no scruples about inter-dining or inter-marriage. I need not repeat my position regarding *Shastras* and their interpretation. I venture to suggest to Shri Sant Ram that it is the only rational and correct and morally defensible position and it has ample warrant in Hindu tradition.

The Harijan, (Mr. Gandhi's mouthpiece.)
August 15, 1936

APPENDIX II

A REPLY TO MR. GANDHI BY DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

I

I appreciate greatly the honour done me by the Mahatma (Gandhi) in taking notice in his *Harijan* of the speech on Caste, which I had prepared for the *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal*. From a perusal of his review of my speech it is clear that the Mahatma (Gandhi) completely dissents from the view I have expressed on the subject of Caste. I am not in the habit of entering into controversy with my opponents unless there are special reasons, which compel me to act otherwise. Had my opponents been some mean and obscure person I would not have pursued him. But my opponent being the Mahatma himself I feel I must attempt to meet the case to the contrary which he has sought to

put forth. While I appreciate the honour he has done me, I must confess to a sense of surprise on finding that of all the persons the Mahatma should accuse me of a desire to seek publicity as he seems to do when he suggests that in publishing the undelivered speech my object was to see that I was not "forgotten."⁹²

Whatever the Mahatma may choose to say my object in publishing the speech was to provoke the Hindus to think and take stock of their position. I have never hankered for publicity and if I may say so, I have more of it than I wish or need. But supposing it was out of the motive of gaining publicity that I printed the speech, who could cast a stone at me? Surely not those, who like the Mahatma, live in glasshouses.

II

Motive apart, what has the Mahatma (Gandhi) to say on the question raised by me in the speech? First of all any one who reads my speech will realize that the Mahatma has entirely missed the issue raised by me and that the issues he has raised are not the issues that arise out of what he is pleased to call my indictment of the Hindus. The principal points that I have tried to make out in my speech may be catalogued as follows:

- (1). That caste has ruined the Hindus.
- (2). That the reorganization of the Hindu society on the basis of *Chaturvarna* is impossible because the *Varnavyavastha* is like a leaky pot or like a man running at the nose. It is incapable of sustaining itself by its own virtue and has an inherent tendency to degenerate into a Caste System unless there is a legal sanction behind it, which can be enforced against every one transgressing his *Varna*.
- (3). That the reorganization of the Hindu Society on the basis of *Chaturvarnya* is harmful because the effect of the *Varnavyavastha* is to degrade the masses by denying them opportunity to acquire knowledge and to emasculate them by denying them the right to be armed.
- (4). That the Hindu Society must be reorganized on a religious

basis, which would recognize the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

(5). That in order to achieve this object the sense of religious sanctity behind Caste and *Varma* must be destroyed.

(6). That only discarding the divine authority of the *Shastras* can

destroy the sanctity of Caste and *Varma*. It will be noticed that the questions raised by the Mahatma are absolutely beside the point and show that the main argument of the speech was lost upon him.

III

Let me examine the substance of the points made by the Mahatma (Gandhi). The first point made by the Mahatma is that the texts cited by me are not authentic. I confess I am not authority on this matter. But I should like to state that the texts cited by me are all taken from the writings of the late Mr. Talik⁹³ who was recognized authority on the Sanskrit language and on the Hindu *Shastras*. His second point is that these *Shastras* should be interpreted not by the learned but the saints and that, as the saints have understood them, the *Shastras* do not support Caste and Untouchability. As regards the first point what I like to ask the Mahatma (Gandhi) is what does it avail to any one if the texts are interpolations and if they have been differently interpreted by the saints? The masses do not make any distinction between texts, which are genuine and texts, which are interpolations. The masses do not know what the texts are. They are too illiterate to know the contents of the *Shastras*. They have believed what they have been told and what they have been told is that the *Shastras* do enjoin as a religious duty the observance of Caste and *Untouchability*.

With regard to the saints, one must admit that howsoever different and elevating their teachings may have been as compared to those of the merely learned, they have been lamentably ineffective. They have been ineffective for two reasons. Firstly, none of the saints ever attacked the Caste System. On the contrary, they were staunch believers in the

System of Castes. Most of them lived and died as members of the caste, to which they respectively belonged. So passionately attached was Jnyandeo to his status as a Brahmin that when the Brahmins of Paithan would not admit him to their fold he moved heaven and earth to get his status as a Brahmin recognized by the Brahmin fraternity. And even the saint Eknath who now figures

in the film "Dharmatma" as a hero for having shown courage to touch the untouchables and dine with them, did so not because he was opposed to Caste and Untouchability but because he felt that the pollution caused thereby could be washed away by a bath in the sacred waters of the river Ganges*.

*The saints have never according to my study carried on a campaign against Caste and Untouchability. They were not concerned with the struggle between men. They were concerned with the relation between men and God. They did not preach that all men were equal. They preached that all men were equal in the eyes of God - a very different and a very innocuous proposition which nobody can find difficult to preach or dangerous to believe in. The second reason why the teachings of the saints proved ineffective was because the masses have been taught that a saint might break caste but the common man must not. A saint therefore never became an example to follow. He always remained a pious man to be honoured. That the masses have remained staunch believers in Caste and Untouchability shows that the pious lives and noble sermons of the saints have had no effect on their life and conduct as against the teachings of the *Shastras*. Thus it can be a matter of no consolation that there were saints or that there is a Mahatma who understands the *Shastras* differently from the learned few or ignorant many. That the masses hold a different view of the *Shastras* is fact, which should and must be reckoned with. How is that to be dealt with except by denouncing the authority of the *Shastras*, which continue to govern their conduct, is a question, which the Mahatma has not considered. But whatever the plan the Mahatma puts forth as an effective means to free the masses from the teachings of the *Shastras*, he must accept that the pious life led by one good Samaritan may be very elevating to himself

but in India, with the attitude the common man has to saints and to Mahatmas - to honour but not to follow - one cannot make much out of it.

IV

The third point made by the Mahatma is that a religion professed by Chaitanya, Jnyandeo, Tukaram, and Tiruvallurvar.

Ramkrishna Paramahansa etc. cannot be devoid of merit as is made out by me and that a religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. I agree with every word of this statement. But I do not quite understand what the Mahatma wishes to prove thereby. The religion should be judged not by its worst specimens but by its best is true enough but does it dispose of the matter? I say it does not. The question still remains - why the worst number so many and the best so few? To my mind there are two conceivable answers to this question:

- (1). That the worst by reason of some original perversity of theirs are morally uneducable and are therefore incapable of making the remotest approach to the religious ideal. Or
- (2) That the religious ideal is a wholly wrong ideal which has given a wrong moral twist to the lives of the many and that the best have become best in spite of the wrong ideal - in fact by giving to the wrong twist a turn in the right direction. Of these two explanations I am not prepared to accept the first and I am sure that even the Mahatma will not insist upon the contrary. To my mind the second is the only logical and reasonable explanation unless the Mahatma has a third alternative to explain why the worst are so many and the best are so few. If the second is the only explanation then obviously the argument of the Mahatma that its best followers should judge a religion carries us nowhere except to pity the lot of the many who have gone wrong because they have been made to worship wrong ideals.

V

The argument of the Mahatma that Hinduism would be tolerable if only many were to follow the example of the saints is fallacious for another reason. In this connection see illuminating article on 'Morality and the Social Structure' by Mr. H. N.

Brailford in the Aryan Path for April 1936. By citing the names of such illustrious persons as Chaitanya etc. what the Mahatma seems to me to suggest in its broadest and simplest form is that Hindu society can be made tolerable and even happy without any fundamental change in its structure if all the high caste Hindus

can be persuaded to follow a high standard of morality in their dealings with the low caste Hindus. I am totally opposed to this kind of ideology. I can respect those of the caste Hindus who try to realize a high social ideal in their life. Without such men India would be a morally reprehensive and a less happy place to live in than it is. But nonetheless anyone who relies on an attempt to turn the members of the caste Hindus into better men by improving their personal character is in my judgment wasting his energy and hugging an illusion. Can personal character make the maker of armaments a good man, i.e. a man who will sell shells that will not burst and gas that will not poison? If it cannot, how can you accept personal character to make man loaded with the consciousness of Caste, a good man, i.e. a man who would treat his fellows as his friends and equal? To be true to himself he must deal with his fellows either as a superior or inferior according as the case may be; at any rate, differently from his own caste fellows. He can never be expected to deal with his fellows as his kinsmen and equals. As a matter of fact, a Hindu does treat all those who are not of his Caste as though they were aliens, who could be discriminated against with impunity and against whom any fraud or trick may be practiced without shame. This is to say that there can be a better or a worse Hindu. But a good Hindu there cannot be. This is not because there is anything wrong with his personal character. In fact what is wrong is the entire basis of his relationship to his fellows. The best man cannot be moral if the basis of relationship between them and their fellows is fundamentally a wrong relationship. To a slave his master may be better or worse. But there cannot be a good master. A good man cannot be a master and a master cannot be a good man. The same applies to the relationship between high caste and low caste. To a low caste man a high

caste man can be better or worse as compared to other high caste men. A high caste man cannot be a good man in so far as he must have a low caste man to distinguish him as high caste man. It cannot be good to a low caste man to be conscious that there is a high caste man above him. I have argued in my speech that a society based on *Varna* or Caste is a society, which is based on a

wrong relationship. I had hoped that the Mahatma would attempt to demolish my argument. But instead of doing that he has merely reiterated his belief in *Chaturvarnya* (Four-Castes) without disclosing the ground on which it is based.

VI

Does the Mahatma (Gandhi) practice what he preaches? One does not like to make personal reference in an argument, which is general in its application. But when one preaches a doctrine and holds it, as dogma there is a curiosity to know how far he practices what he preaches. It may be that his failure to practice is due to the ideal being too high to be attainable; it may be that his failure to practice is due to the innate hierocracy of the man. In any case he exposes his conduct to examination and I must not be blamed if I asked how far the Mahatma (Gandhi) attempted to realize his ideal in his own case. The Mahatma is a Bania⁹⁴ by birth. His ancestors had abandoned trading in favour of minister-ship, a 'calling of the Brahmins'. In his own life, before he became a Mahatma, when occasion came for him to choose his career he preferred law to scales. On abandoning law he became half saint and half politician. He has never touched trading, which is his 'ancestral calling'. His youngest son - I take one who is a faithful follower of his father - born a *Vaishiya* has married a Brahmin's daughter and has chosen to serve a newspaper magnate. The Mahatma is not known to have condemned him for not following his ancestral calling. It may be wrong and uncharitable to judge an ideal by its worst specimens. But surely the Mahatma as a specimen is no better and if he even fails to realize the ideal then the ideal must be an impossible ideal quite opposed to the practical instincts of man. Students of Carlyle⁹⁵ know that he often spoke on a subject before he thought about it. I wonder whether such has not been the case

with the Mahatma in regard to the subject matter of Caste. Otherwise certain questions, which occur to me, would not have escaped him. When a calling be deemed to have become an ancestral calling so as to make it binding on a man? Must man follow his ancestral calling even if it does not suit his capacities,

even when it has ceased to be profitable? Must a man live by his ancestral calling even if he finds it to be immoral? If every one must pursue his ancestral calling then it must follow that a man must continue to be a pimp because his grandfather was a pimp and a woman must continue to be a prostitute because her grandmother was a prostitute. Is the Mahatma prepared to accept the logical conclusion of his doctrine? To me his ideal of following one's ancestral calling is not only an impossible ideal, but it is also morally an indefensible ideal.

VII

The Mahatma sees great virtue in a Brahmin remaining a Brahmin all his life. Leaving aside the fact there are many Brahmins who do not like to remain Brahmins all their lives, what can we say about those Brahmins who have clung to their ancestral calling of priesthood? Do they do so from any faith in the virtue of the principle of ancestral calling or do they do so from motives of filthy lucre? The Mahatma does not seem to concern himself with such queries. He is satisfied that these are "real Brahmins who are living on alms freely given to them and giving freely they have of spiritual treasures". This is how a hereditary Brahmin priest appears to the Mahatma - a carrier of spiritual treasures. But another portrait of the hereditary Brahmin can also be drawn. A Brahmin can be a priest to Vishnu - the God of Love. He can be a priest to *Shankar* - the God of Destruction. He can be a priest at Buddha *Gaya* worshipping Buddha - the greatest teacher of mankind who taught the noblest doctrine of Love. He can also be a priest to Kali, the Goddess, who must have a daily sacrifice of an animal to satisfy her thirst for blood. He will be a priest of the temple of Rama - the *Kshatriya* God! He will also be a priest of the

Temple of Parshuram, the one who took Avatar to destroy the *Kshatriya*! He can be a priest to Brahma, the Creator of the world. He can be priest to a Muslim whose God Allah will not brook the claim of Brahma to share his spiritual dominion over the world! No one can say that this is a picture, which is not true to life. If this is a true picture one does not know what to say of

this capacity to bear loyalties to Gods and Goddesses whose attributes are so antagonistic that no honest man can be a devotee to all of them. The Hindus rely upon this extraordinary phenomenon as evidence of the greatest virtue of their religion - namely its catholicity, the spirit of toleration. As against this facile view, it can be urged that what is toleration and catholicity may be really nothing more credible than indifference or flaccid latitudinarianism. These two attitudes are hard to distinguish in their outer-seeming. But they are so vitally unlike in their real quality that no one who examines them closely can mistake one for the other. That a man is ready to render homage to many Gods and Goddesses may be cited as evidence of his tolerant spirit. But can it not also be evidence of insincerity born of a desire to serve the times? I am sure that this toleration is merely insincerity. If this view is well founded, one may ask what spiritual treasure can there be with a person who is ready to be a priest and a devotee to any deity, whom it serves his purpose to worship and to adore? Not only must such a person be deemed to be bankrupt of all spiritual treasures but for him to practice so elevating a profession as that of a priest simply because it is ancestral, without faith, without belief, merely as a mechanical process handed down from father to son, is not a conservation of virtue; it is really the prostitution of a noble profession which is no other than the service of religion.

VIII

Why does the Mahatma cling to the theory of every one following his or her ancestral calling? He gives his reasons nowhere. But there must be some reason although he does not care to avow it. Years ago writing on "Caste verses Class" in his 'Young India' he argued that Caste System was better than Class

System on the grounds that Caste was the best possible adjustment of social stability. If that were the reason why the Mahatma clings to the theory of every one following his/her ancestral calling, then he is clinging to a false view of social life. Everybody wants social stability and some adjustment must be made in the relationship between individuals and classes in order

that stability may be had. But two things, I am sure no body wants. One thing no body wants is static relationship, something that is unalterable, and something that is fixed for all times. Stability is wanted but not at the cost of change when change is imperative. Second thing nobody wants is mere adjustment. Adjustment is wanted but not at the sacrifice of social justice. Can it be said that the adjustment of social relationship on the basis of caste i.e. on the basis of each to his hereditary calling avoids these two evils? I am convinced that it does not. Far from being the best possible adjustment I have no doubt that it is of the worst possible kind inasmuch as it offends against both the canons of social adjustment - namely fluidity and equality.

IX

Some might think that the Mahatma has made much progress inasmuch as he now only believes in Varna⁹⁶ and does not believe in Caste. It is true that there was a time when the Mahatma was a full-blooded and a blue-blooded *Sanatni* Hindu. He believed in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the *Puranas* and all that goes by the name of Hindu scriptures and therefore in Avatars and rebirth. He believed in Caste and defended it with the vigour of the orthodox. He condemned the cry for inter-dining, inter-drinking and inter-marriage and argued that restraints about inter-dining to great extent "helped the cultivation of will-power and the conservation of certain social virtues." It is good that he has repudiated this sanctimonious nonsense and admitted that caste "is harmful both to spirit and national growth," and may be, his son's marriage outside his caste has had something to do with this change of view. But has the Mahatma really progressed? What is the nature of the *Varna* for which the Mahatma stands? Is it Vedic conception as

commonly understood and preached by Swami Dayanand⁹⁷ Saraswati and his followers, the *Arya Samajists*? The essence of the Vedic conception of *Varna* is the pursuit of a calling, which is appropriate to one's natural aptitude. The essence of the Mahatma's conception of *Varna* is the pursuit of ancestral calling irrespective of natural aptitude. What the difference between

Caste and Varna is as understood by the Mahatma? I find none. As defined by the Mahatma, Varna becomes merely a different name of Caste for the simple reason that it is the same essence - namely pursuit of ancestral calling. Far from making progress the Mahatma has suffered retrogression. By putting this interpretation upon the Vedic conception of *Varna* he has really made ridiculous what was sublime. While I reject the Vedic *Varnavyavastha* for reasons given in the speech I must admit that the Vedic theory of *Varna* as interpreted by Swami Dayanand and some others is a sensible and an inoffensive thing. It did not admit birth as a determining factor in fixing the place of an individual in society. It only recognized worth. The Mahatma's view of *Varna* not only makes nonsense of the Vedic *Varna* but it makes it an abominable thing. *Varna* and Caste are two very different concepts. *Varna* is based on the principle of each according to his worth, while Caste is based on the principle of each according to his birth. The two are as distinct as chalk is from cheese. In fact there is an antithesis between the two. If the Mahatma believes as he does in every one following his or her ancestral calling, then most certainly he is advocating the Caste System and that in calling it the *Varna* System he is not only guilty of terminological in-exactitude, but he is causing confusion worse confounded. I am sure that all his confusion is due to the fact that the Mahatma has no definite and clear conception as to what is *Varna* and what is Caste and as to the necessity of either for the conservation of Hinduism. He has said and one hopes that he will not find some mystic reason to change his views that caste is not the essence of Hinduism. Does he regard *Varna* as the essence of Hinduism? One cannot as yet give any categorical answer. Readers of his article on "Dr. Ambedkar's Indictment" will answer "No." In that article he does

not say that the dogma of *Varna* is an essential part of the creed of Hinduism. Far from making *Varna* the essence of Hinduism he says: "the essence of Hinduism is contained in its enunciation of one and only God as Truth and its bold acceptance of *Ahmisa* as the law of the human family." But the readers of his article in reply to Mr. Sant Ram will say "yes." In that article he says:

"How can a Muslim remain one if he rejects the Quran, or a Christian remains as Christian if he rejects the Bible? If Caste and *Varna* are convertible terms and if *Varna* is an integral part of the *Shastras* which define Hinduism I do not know how a person who rejects Caste, i.e. *Varna* can call himself a Hindu?" Why this prevarication? Why does the Mahatma hedge? Whom does he want to please? Has the saint failed to sense the truth? Or does the politician stand in the way of the Saint? The real reason why the Mahatma is suffering from this confusion is probably to be traced to two sources. The first is the temperament of the Mahatma. He has almost in everything the simplicity of the child with the child's capacity for self-deception. Like a child he can believe in anything he wants to believe. We must therefore wait till such time as it pleases the Mahatma to abandon his faith in *Varna* as it has pleased him to abandon his faith in Caste. The second source of confusion is the double role, which the [Mahatma wants to play - of a Mahatma and a politician](#). As a Mahatma he may be trying to spiritualise Politics. Whether he has succeeded in it or not Politics have certainly commercialized him. A politician must know that Society cannot bear the whole truth and that he must not speak the whole truth; if he is speaking the whole truth it is bad for his politics. The reason why the Mahatma is always supporting Caste and *Varna* is because he is afraid that if he opposed them he will lose his place in politics.⁹⁸ What ever may be the source of this confusion the Mahatma must be told that he is deceiving himself and also deceiving the people by preaching Caste under the name of *Varna*.

X

The Mahatma says that the standards I have applied to

test Hindus and Hinduism are too severe and that judged by those standards every known living faith will probably fail. The complaint that my standards are high may be true. But the question is not whether they are high or whether they are low. The question is whether they are the right standards to apply. A people and their religion must be judged by social standards

based on social ethics. No other standard would have any meaning if religion were held to be a necessary good for the well being of the people. Now I maintain that the standards I have applied to test Hindus and Hinduism are the most appropriate standards and that I know of none that are better.

The conclusion that every known religion would fail if tested by my standards may be true. But this fact does not give the Mahatma as the champion of Hindus and Hinduism a ground for comfort any more than the existence of one madman should give comfort to another madman or the existence of one criminal should give comfort to another criminal.

I like to assure the Mahatma that it is not mere failure of the Hindus and Hinduism, which has produced in me the feelings of disgust and contempt with which I am charged. I realize that the world is a very imperfect world and any one who wants to live in it must bear with its imperfections. But while I am prepared to bear with the imperfections and shortcomings of the society in which I may be destined to labour, I feel I should not consent to live in a society which cherishes wrong ideals or a society which having right ideals will not consent to bring its social life in conformity with those ideals. If I am disgusted with Hindus and Hinduism it is because I am convinced that they cherish wrong ideals and live a wrong social life. My quarrel with Hindus and Hinduism is not over the imperfections of their social conduct. It is much more fundamental. It is over their ideals.

XI

Hindu society seems to me to stand in need of a moral regeneration, which it is dangerous to postpone. And the question is who can determine and control this moral

regeneration? Obviously only those who have undergone an intellectual regeneration and those who are honest enough to have the courage of their convictions born of intellectual emancipation can control the moral regeneration.

Judged by this standard the Hindu leaders who count are in my opinion quite unfit for the task. It is impossible to say that

they have undergone the preliminary intellectual regeneration. If they had undergone an intellectual regeneration they would neither delude themselves in the simple way of the untaught multitude nor would they take advantage of the primitive ignorance of others as one sees them doing. Notwithstanding the crumbling state of Hindu society these leaders will nevertheless unblushingly appeal to ideals of the past, which have in every way ceased to have any connection with the present; which however suitable they might have been in the days of their origin, have now become a warning rather than a guide.

They still have a mystic respect for the earlier forms, which make them disinclined - nay opposed to any examination of the foundations of their Society. The Hindu masses are of course incredibly heedless in the formation of their beliefs. But so are the Hindu leaders. And what is worse is that these Hindu leaders become filled with an illicit passion for their beliefs when any one proposes to rob them of their companionship. The Mahatma is no exception. The Mahatma appears not to believe in thinking. He prefers to follow the saints.

Like a conservative with his reverence for consecrated notions, he is afraid that if he once starts thinking, many ideals and institutions to which he clings will be doomed. One must sympathize with him. For every act of independent thinking puts some portion of apparently stable world in peril. But it is equally true that dependence on saints cannot lead us to know the truth. The saints are after all only human beings and as Lord Belfour⁹⁹ said, "the human mind is no more a truth finding apparatus than the snout of a pig." In so far as he does think, to me he really appears to be prostituting his intelligence to find reasons for supporting this archaic social structure of the Hindus. He is most influential apologist of it and therefore the worst enemy of the

Hindus. Unlike the Mahatma there are Hindu leaders who are not content merely to believe and follow. They dare to think, and act in accordance with the result of their thinking. But unfortunately they are either a dishonest lot or an indifferent lot when it comes to the question of giving right guidance to the mass of the people. Almost every Brahmin has transgressed the rule of

Caste. The numbers of Brahmins who sell shoes are far greater than those who practice priesthood. Not only have the Brahmins given up their ancestral-calling of priesthood for trading but also they have entered trades, which are prohibited to them by the *Shastras*. Yet how many Brahmins who break Caste every day will preach against Caste and against the *Shastras*?

For one honest Brahmin preaching against Caste and *Shastras* because his practical instinct and moral conscience cannot support a conviction in them, there are hundreds who break Caste and trample upon the *Shastras* every day but who are the most fanatic upholders of the theory of Caste and the sanctity of the *Shastras*. Why this duplicity?

Because they feel that if the masses are emancipated from the yoke of Caste they would be a menace to the power and prestige of the Brahmins as a class. The dishonesty of this intellectual class who would deny the masses the fruit of their thinking is a most disgraceful phenomenon.

The Hindus in the words of Mathew Arnold¹⁰⁰ are "wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born." What are they to do? The Mahatma to whom they appeal for guidance does not believe in thinking and can therefore give no guidance, which can be said to stand the test of experience. The intellectual classes to whom the masses look for guidance are either too dishonest or too indifferent to educate them in the right direction. We are indeed witness to a great tragedy. In the face of this tragedy all one can do is to lament and say - such be thy Leaders, O! Hindus.¹⁰¹

continued.....

COMMENTARY
in
the form of
FOOTNOTES

1. On my visit to Kanchipuram in 1998 a priest told me that the *Shudras* in mediaeval South India were obliged to donate eldest daughters to the temple as *Apsaras* (dancer) to please gods. Human desire being a fact of life between *Brahmin* priests and the dancers, their illegitimate daughters were made to take place of the mothers and sons were called '*Harijans*' (God's people) probably a step higher than the ordinary *Shudras*. Mr. Gandhi renamed *Shudras* as *Harijans*; that is why Dr. Ambedkar and his followers considered this title as derogatory and fought tooth and nail with Government and Gandhi to do away with that appellation. As a result of protests by the Untouchables of India, the Government of India has decided not to use this word in their official documents. (See "Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage.")

2. Since the inception of *Varna*, *Kshatriyas* along with other two categories viz *Vashiyas* and *Shudras*, became subservient to Brahmins. Here, the Hindu *Khatris* of the Punjab wanted Dr. Ambedkar to concentrate only on doing the dirty job of condemning the Brahmins rather than condemning the source i.e. *Manusmriti* (Manu's law book and other scriptures, which openly condoned *Varnashram* (Caste System). Hindus' *Bapu* (father) Gandhi worshipped those scriptures as a dictate from God. He hated Dr. Ambedkar, an iconoclast determined to break and tear apart anything and everything that proved to be an instrument in shackling his people for thousands of years. As in the case of their ancestors, Hindus of the Punjab were simply buying time to

make sure that Dr. Ambedkar was also a failure. No Hindu on this planet could divert Dr. Ambedkar's attention from freeing his people. That insurmountable task had to be tackled in Dr. Ambedkar's way, no more or no less, and that also in his lifetime.

3. *Shudra* sages such as *Valmiki* (1450 B.C.), *Mahatmas* and

Gurus from other castes in India tried to get rid of caste system without being 'unnecessarily provocative and pinching' but miserably failed because they preached the annihilation of Caste only in partial theory and failed to set a practical example. For Dr. Ambedkar, getting rid of the so-called religious scriptures that preached Caste System and condemned intermarriages was the only solution to cleanse black spot of Caste System from India's forehead.

4. If Dr. Ambedkar had insisted on a promise of passing a resolution in the Conference to the effect that in order to become members of the *Arya Smaj* the Hindus had to make a pledge in the principle of inter-dinning and inter-marriage with the *Shudras*, the executive of the Conference by itself would have disbanded in no time. Fact of the matter is that Caste is so deeply ingrained in the Indian Society that the *Arya Samaj* would have been left with no members. Bottom line is that Hindus were jealous of Buddha's teachings of 'equality of mankind' and Dr. Ambedkar, a *Shudra* had recommended his flock to embrace Buddhism. The Hindus were so used to abusing the *Shudras* for the last five thousand years that a word of logic from Dr. Ambedkar had acted like salt on the gangrene. For that matter, even in 21st century, Indians in general and the Hindus in particular still prove to be the most prejudiced people in so far as caste and colour are concerned. Nevertheless, in North America, they blame the White man for being prejudiced against the East Indians. As compared to prejudices displayed by Hindus/Sikhs against their own people, white-man seems to be liberal minded and upholder of Human Rights.

5. Guru Nanak's mission just as that of Siddhartha Gautma, the Buddha (c. 560-c.480 B.C.) and Mahavira, the founder of

Jainism and contemporary of the Buddha, came into being to free India and its people from the exploits of Brahmins. Since Sikh Gurus hailed from Hindu *Khatris* Caste, baptism of the eldest son as a *Khalsa* warrior became a tradition in the Hindu families of the Punjab. So long as *Khalsa* was needed as a saviour of the Hindus and their Hinduism from the ever-present marauding Muslims who broke their icons, replaced their

temples with mosques, converted them to Islam forcibly and raped their women, it was a matter of one and the same family. As soon as the British *Raj* took control of India and the Hindus had no Muslims to be afraid of, they tried to find ways and means of severing fraternal ties with Sikhism. That feeling of emancipation from the clutches of the Muslims and a jealousy which arose from an automatic increase in the ranks of Sikhism at the cost of Hinduism, had brought about the birth of *Arya Smaj*. *Arya Smaj*, a mouthpiece of the most fanatic Hindus of those times did an irreparable damage to relations between Hindus and Sikhs. Dr. Ambedkar, a political scientist astute enough to sense the dirty game played by the Punjabi Hindus, drifted away from them cautiously. It is a matter of regret that the Sikhs are observing Caste System (and untouchability) in the same way as the Hindus. Hindus converted into Sikhs remain with the same caste or create a sub-caste of the same social status. For example, the Hindu *Chamar*, *Chuhra*, *Julaha*, *Tarkhan* etc. becomes a Sikh *Ramdasia*, *Mazhabi* Sikh and *Kabir Panthi* Sikh and Rangarhia etc. respectively on conversion to Sikhism. A Hindu *Brahmin*, *Khatris*, *Rajput*, *Jat* and *Nai* etc. on conversion to Sikhism become Brahmin Sikh, *Khatris* Sikh, *Rajput* Sikh, *Jat* Sikh and *Nai* Sikh etc. respectively. The only difference between the attitude of the Hindus and the Sikhs is that untouchables are not barred from entering the *Gurdwaras* or taking part in the *Langar* while these people are not allowed to enter the Hindu temples. Outside the *Gurdwaras* Caste is equally strong amongst the Sikhs in the matter of inter-dinning and inter-marriages. In the villages of Punjab where Sikhs/Hindus dominate the cremation grounds, low castes are allotted a separate plot far away for the purpose.

So the findings of Dr. Ambedkar in regard to Hindu society are no less applicable to the Sikh society.

(Also see f/notes of P. 268, 270 & 272 of 'Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage'.)

6. Religious dictates based on ancient holy scriptures such as *Manusmriti*, Manu's law book and a vast amount of religious Literature produced by the Brahmins during a period well known

as '*Brahminical Period*' (c. 2500-300 B.C.), *Shudras* suffered most during that period. Also refer to 'Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage', p.134.

7. Guru is a Spiritual teacher in Hindu and Sikh religions. Hindi: 'the venerable one.' Sanskrit - One who enlightens.

8. Shivaji, also known as 'Shivaji Marhata', (1627-80) was the ideal guerrilla leader and a symbol of resurgent Hindu Nationalism. He built up the Maharashtra (Ambedkar's province) people as a strong and unified group and gave them a Nationalist background.

9. This is just in accordance with the *Manusmriti* (IX-317), which says that a Brahmin must be shown utmost respect even if he is foolish, ignorant and illiterate and that a *Shudra*, even if proven intelligent, should not be allowed any education.

10. It may be interesting to note all the religious books of the Hindus (*Vedas*, *Smritis*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabhart*, *Gita*, *Shastras* and *Puranas* etc. and Commentaries thereon by various philosophers like Shankara Acharya and Ramanuja etc.) either explicitly preach caste or are silent about it as if no such evil exists in the Hindu society. There is no book with the Hindus, which expressly refutes the theory or practice of Caste System and discrimination between man and man. Even Satyarath Prakash of the *Arya Samaj* and religious books of Brahmo Samaj of Raja Ram Mohan Roy do not condemn Caste System as an institution. Even Vivekanand was proud of Caste System as unique social system of the Hindus. What he hated was Untouchability. He called Hinduism '**touch-me-not-ism**.'

Mr. M. K. Gandhi, who boasted to be a 'down to earth' 20th century social reformer of modern India, believed in Caste System and upheld it in his writings. He only wanted

Untouchability to go which is concomitant of Caste System; his warped thinking could not comprehend intricacies of close relationship between Untouchability and Caste System. Four-fold division of Hindu society has *Shudras* as its integral part in the shape of its lowest rung. Untouchability is very much preached in regard to *Shudras* in all the Hindu *Dharm Shastras*. Who would protest against Caste System? Only *Shudras* and

they were denied education! Almost all the books exposing Caste System of the Hindus have been written by foreigners. Even best factual description of the Caste System as it affects various sections of the population (favourably or unfavourably) has come from western authors who lived enough in various parts of rural India. The Census reports and books based thereon written by British officials are eye openers even for the Indians who lived all their lives in the Caste-ridden Indian society, so far as they describe the conditions and life styles of various castes right from powerful Brahmins and land owning High Castes to the criminal tribes and destitute nomadic castes who eat vermin and animals for keeping body and soul together.

Modern High Caste authors writing about Caste are apologetic for Caste System. Only Depressed Classes authors criticize Caste System both for its theory and evil that it has brought to Indian Society.

11. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (*Lokmanya*) (1856-1920) from the same Province of Maharashtra as Ambedkar, justified violence and warfare for a righteous cause. The efforts of Lord Curzon, the Governor General of India, to partition Bengal in order to destroy the unity and strength of the most powerful and politically conscious community in India, roused Tilak to a more rebel mood in 1905. In order to boycott the import of cloth and other consumable goods from England, he announced *Swadeshi* and demanded *Swaraj*. "*Swaraj* is our birth-right," proclaimed Tilak. "If you deny us *Swaraj* we will blow you to smithereens," added the Nationalist. His movement spread like wild fire across India. Many Nationalists from all across India, including Tilak, were deported to Burma. The British called Lord Curzon back home as a result of his experiment. Lord Minto, the Viceroy,

using the King-Emperor's birthday as an excuse, proclaimed an amnesty and the leaders returned home after a six month of exile in Burma.

12. Mr. Bannerji conveniently forgot to mention the problem of the Dalits, the Depressed Classes, the Untouchables and the Tribal people whom the Hindus Caste System had converted into a position worst than slavery. Were they not better off under the

British laws based on the principle of justice and equality than they had been under the laws of Manu? For them were not white masters better than brown ones?

13. Gujarat was Mr. Gandhi's province where his policies were considered as a testament from God.

14. It is interesting to note that when Dr. Ambedkar raised the issue of Kavitha incident, Gandhi simply replied that he could not understand the anger of a high souled and highly educated person such as Dr. Ambedkar over atrocities committed by the Hindus in Kavitha and other villages. For Gandhi and his Hindus, Balais (untouchables) were destined to serve them with no ifs and buts. Expectation of work from untouchables (*Shudras*) for free fell well within the dictates of Manu's *Varnashram* (Caste System) and Gandhi was a great proponent of that derogatory system. 'Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage,' by G. Thind, p. 267.

15. Ghee=Clarified butter. Hindu scriptures call for offering hawan (this ritual calls for maintaining fire by feeding it with spoonfuls of clarified butter) to deities representing different gods and goddesses. Hindus, even in the twenty first century waste tons of clarified butter a year to observe this ritual whereas poor Hindus cannot afford a drop of it for their children.

16. Jagjiwan Ram, a *Shudra* (untouchable) himself, being a lackey of Gandhi and his Congress, did not utter a word in defence of his co-caste people who voted for him and were poorest of the poor and were treated worst than animals.

17. Over 65 years have passed since Dr. Ambedkar wrote this speech. When the British ruled over India, slow progress for removal of the social ills from which India suffered, including the social ills like Untouchability, Communalism, Caste System

etc. were attributed to lack of independence. What has been achieved in this regard from 1947 to date?

Anybody going through newspapers in India can come across news narrating incidents of the type Dr. Ambedkar had related above, in dozens daily. There are reports of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (now National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled

Tribes) describing well publicized stories of atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and offences like observances of the torturing and discrimination against these Castes and Tribes. A Website on the Inter-Net now displays news relating to the Scheduled Castes/Tribes and the adverse situation through which they are passing i.e. humiliations in day-to-day life, rape of women, denial of work/fair wages, false police cases to implicate social activists working for the protection of poor people, lack of educational facilities for poor children, unmerited removal from service, usurpation of things belonging to poor people, poor housing conditions, uprooting of Tribal people from their habitats for construction of dams and factories, denial of temple entry, assaults for show of personal dignity and freedom, bonded labour, deaths due to starvation and dirty water etc. etc.

18. It is a shame to the humanity at large that even in the twenty first century i.e. sixty four years after the above incident, *Dalit* children are intimidated away from schools by the High Castes in many parts of India. Also see 'Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage' by G. S. Thind, p. 376.

19. John Stuart Mill (1806-73) was an English author, philosopher, economist, and reformer. Mill wrote on subjects that ranged from women's suffrage to political ethics. He became an assistant examiner of the India House in 1828 and had charge of the East India Company's relations with the Indian Princely States from 1836.

20. Who amongst the Reformers could have put in the issue? None of them belonged to the *Shudra* Caste and never suffered from rigours of Caste System. If the Social Reform Party had raised the issue, it would have died still earlier because by

raising the Caste issue, they would have challenged a system supported by Hindu religion, a system as old as 5000 years.

21. Lassalle Ferdinand (1825-64) was one of the chief 19th century theorists of socialism and a founder of the German labour movement. Ferdinand believed in a legal and evolutionary approach to political change, particularly through the introduction of universal suffrage, or the right to vote. Ferdinand

was born in Poland and attended universities at Breslau, Berlin, and Paris. From 1848 to 1857 Ferdinand lived in Dusseldorf, where he took part in the abortive revolution of 1848-49 to establish a constitutional monarchy that would foster civil rights. Ferdinand was one of the few radical leaders who did not leave the country to escape persecution during the revolution; he remained in Germany after the revolution's failure. Although he was repeatedly arrested, indicted, and imprisoned for his ideas, he counted his years in Dusseldorf where he was active as both a writer and a labour organizer. In 1859 he settled in Berlin where, as a political journalist, he tried to persuade workers' association to organize into a general federation to promote voting rights at all levels of society.

22. Karl Marx (1818-83), the father of scientific socialism was known during his lifetime only to a small group of socialists and revolutionaries. Marx wrote books now considered by communists all over the world to be the source of absolute truth on matters of economics, philosophy, and politics. Most modern socialists also base their doctrines to a lesser or greater degree on Marx's theories.

23. Roughly modern day Germany.

24. An award by the British Government granting reserved seats in the legislature (Provincial and Central) and separate electorate to the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Depressed Classes. In May 1930 it was the first time in the history of India that Dr. Ambedkar was successful in securing an Award from the British *Raj* for the Depressed Classes in line with Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans as well as Muslims and the Sikhs. Gandhi hit the roof and went on 'Fast unto death' because the Award of Separate Electorate to the Untouchables turned mighty

Hindus into a minority. On September 24, 1932, to save his face from that gimmick of 'Fast Unto Death' Gandhi had to agree to grant 148 seats to the Depressed Classes in the Provincial Assemblies and as well they were given 18% of the seats of the Hindus from British India in the Central Assembly. To save his life Gandhi had to agree to give 148 seats instead of 71 previously granted by the British *Raj*. Had there been Muslims in

place of *Shudras*, Gandhi would not have gone on hunger strike because he very well knew that they would have let him die. The Pact between Ambedkar and Gandhi is called Poona Pact in which Dr. Ambedkar agreed to the demand of Gandhi for joint electorate of the Caste Hindus and the Depressed Classes. The result was that in spite of large number of seats reserved for them, the Depressed Classes could not send to the legislatures their real representatives because the High Caste voters outnumbered the Depressed Classes voters. Even leaders of the eminence of Dr. Ambedkar were defeated. See 'Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage,' by G. Thind, pp 203-249.

25. John Edward Redmond (1851-1918) was an Irish parliamentary leader and a member of British House of Commons from 1881 to his death. As a leader of reunited Irish nationalists after 1900 he sought Home Rule by persistent but peaceful methods.

26. Ulster was a former province of Ireland in the North East corner of island. It consisted of 9 counties; 6 of those now form Northern Ireland.

27. Patricians, the aristocrats of ancient Rome, belonged to a higher caste.

28. Lower order of citizens of ancient Rome frequently excluded from governing bodies.

29. Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a German leader of the Reformation. He inaugurated the Protestant Reformation in Germany in 1517. It was his intent to reform the medieval Roman Catholic Church, but the firm resistance of the church to Luther's challenge led instead to permanent division in the structure of Western Christianity.

Pope Leo X, in order to raise money for the building of

St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, offered "indulgences" for sale to the people. These offered partial remissions of the penalty for sins to those who made donations of money. Luther strongly objected to the practice.

On October 31, 1517, Luther nailed to the door of the church in Wittenberg a list of 95 theses, or propositions. They denied the right of the Pope to forgive sins by the sale of the

indulgences, among other challenges. The theses were widely circulated in Germany and caused a great controversy.

The pope ordered Luther to appear before Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg. The cardinal demanded that Luther retract all he had said. Luther refused to do that unless it could be proved to him from the Bible that he was wrong.

Early in 1521 the pope issued a Bull of Excommunication (equivalent to issuance of *Fatwa* by a clergy of Muslims or *Hukam Nama* by a high priest of the Sikhs) against Luther and ordered Emperor Charles V to execute it. Instead, to make the domineering religious and aristocratic elements happy, the emperor called a "diet," or council, at Worms and summoned Luther for examination. The diet demanded that Luther recant, but he refused and was outlawed.

When will a Luther be born in India?

30. PURITANISM: Certain citizens of England - farmers, merchants, professional men, and scholars from University of Cambridge were called Puritans during the reign of King James I (1394-1437). They asked him to "Purify" the State Church of England of certain ceremonies and usages derived from the Roman Catholic Church, which they disliked. Puritans won after a long political fight with monarchy.

31. Guru Nanak revolted against Brahmanism, which stood for supremacy of the Brahmin priests and *Varnashram*, which was proven to be a contagious disease in the Hindu Society, he therefore advocated a thought based on equality of mankind. Accordingly rest of the nine Gurus put an end to priesthood but unfortunately Sikhism is back in the fold of priests more than

ever before. Even illiterate priests call shots in Sikh politics and Sikh way of life. As compared to 99 % of the Christian priests who must have two degrees, one from a regular university and the other from a theological college, 99% of the Sikh priests and members of *Kirtni Jathas* (Sikh religious songsters) are school dropouts. Majority of them go into this profession only because they lack motivation to be industrious and successful in this

ever-changing world of technology; simply put, they are inefficient to learn some technical trade.

32. Let us give an example from modern social history of India to show how a single social factor of untouchability affects the rate of progress of communities, which were considered backward till lately.

Hindu society is hierarchical with thousands of castes placed one above the other with some at the bottom, some at the top and the rest spread in the middle in various orders in various parts of the country, some time some caste known by different names in different regions. But one All-India dividing line is that of Untouchability. Some castes broadly known as Brahmin, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas* are above the Untouchability line and others are below that line. While the first three shared among themselves, the good things of life like power of knowledge, power of administration and power of wealth, others shared only deprivations of life, with no power of any sort. Even their religion viz. Hinduism, tells them to be content with their fate because God gave them the kind of life they deserved as per their *Karmas* in past lives. Thus while three categories of castes above the Untouchability line have made lot of progress by making full use of the opportunities thrown up by self-rule after India became independent of the British, the Untouchables have almost stagnated where they were, due to the stigma of Untouchability, as if they have themselves agreed to be enslaved. If somebody is stigmatized as inferior in every aspect of life, right from birth and is not spared even after death (as they can't share cremation grounds of the high castes) how can he dare to think of improving his lot? Whereas most backward castes above the Untouchability line have improved their social status, no

Untouchable caste has been able to cross the Untouchability line to become pure/touchable caste. It seems India consists of 'Two Nations', one consisting of High Castes and the other consisting of low caste Untouchables and the gap will not be filled till the abolition of caste under rigorous rules framed for the purpose or there is a total cultural revolution changing the mental make-up

of the whole Indian nation as happened in China.

33. The Caste System is ingrained in the Hindu society to such a degree that they may die of cholera and other communicable diseases but will never clean their surroundings except through Untouchables. A cyclone ravaged eastern India in July of 1999; hundreds of thousands of animal carcasses were seen lying all around the villages; they were unable to get hungry because of the stink all around them, yet, according to the Caste system they were High Caste and that privileged them to avoid doing a dirty job. "I cannot do this," said Gopinath Bahera of village Jagatsingpur. "I had thought I would pour the kerosene, light a matchstick and get the money. But then they asked us to lift the carcasses and take them somewhere. I have some self-respect left." With no solution in sight, the health officials flew 200 low caste workers from New Delhi and 500 from other areas of Orissa state to load the animal carcasses onto hand-drawn carts and take them away for burning. While the villagers were clinging on to their High Castes, other Hindus were offering Divas (burning candles using clarified butter) and incense to gods and goddesses at the sacred of the most sacred temples of Jagannath in Puri to ward off cyclones. As soon as the *Shudras* wake up, demand a share of pie and refuse to do the dirty work, Hindu society will either get rid of the Caste System or collapse. It's up to the *Shudras* to ascertain how soon they want to shake this degrading system off their backs and gain self-respect. *Shudras* must "Educate, Agitate and Organize." (Dr. Ambedkar).

34. In the West there are family names denoting occupations like Carter, Cook, Baker, Butcher, Shoemaker, Smith, Barker, Barber, Tanner, Turner, Butler, Goldsmith, Hunter and Fisher etc. Those people are proud to use these surnames as no stigma

is attached to these occupations or these words. In India, on the other hand, such socially useful professions as scavenging, tanning, shoemaking, weaving and smithy etc. have been considered as degrading and those skilled craftsmen and women in these professions are called outcastes. In fact the more physical exertion a profession requires, the less honourable it is considered. The more exploitative of others a profession is, the

more honourable it is considered. The most honourable person is one who lives on unearned income. That is why there is so much exploitation and corruption in India. The tragedy of the situation is that such socially undesirable attitude is taught in the religious books of the Hindus. *Manusmriti* mentions many professions as degrading and fit for the Untouchables only and hence even today persons/communities performing those professions are considered as low and fit for hatred and contempt, however economically and socially useful those professions maybe. City municipalities and corporations know how useful and indispensable the sweepers and scavengers are to them, yet they do not provide them proper wages, adequate holidays, health and education facilities or good housing. Most of the Untouchables have no assets at all and live from hand-to-mouth. To crown it all, call a sweeper or a tanner by his caste name, you deprive him of even personal dignity as a human being.

35. William Bateson (1861-1926) was British biologist, one of the founders of the science of genetics.

36. According to 'Early Hindu India,' 1917, pp 225-226, by Prof. A. K. Mazumdar, Vishnu claimed to be the progenitor of Aryans was a dwarf and deceitful. For deceitful role of Vishnu in vanquishing the mighty Bali, a kind-hearted aborigine emperor sees 'Our Indian-Sub-Continent Heritage,' 1999, by G. Thind.

37. Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939 and as the war heated up, Viceroy of India committed India to war with Germany without the consent of any of its political leaders. In the beginning of 1940, while looking for a regiment of martyrs to be deployed on the German front to evaluate the weaponry used by the enemy, the Viceroy approached some of the Sikh Maharajas. The Maharaja of Kapurthala, chief of all the lackeys

of the British volunteered his Sikh regiment with no shame; not a single warrior from a Private to General returned. Author being a resident of Kapurthala State is well aware of the misdeeds of that Maharaja; some of his relatives who were in the first dispatch lost their lives. While the Sikhs were laying down their lives to save India from would be 'new masters' i.e. Germans/Japanese,

Gandhi and his gutless Hindu creed were seen running around with 'Individual Civil Disobedience Movement' flags, preaching non-participation in the war, on the grounds of non-violence. In order to grab power in a hurry Gandhi, Nehru and their fellow Hindu traitors, Congressmen and women, accepted India being divided and sandwiched between two wings of Pakistan. It was the Sikh regiments which fought the liberation of Bangladesh from the shackles of Pakistan. See 'Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage,' pp 285-294, by G. S. Thind.

38. Please see 'Our Indian-Sub Continent Heritage'

39. War of the Roses: A quarrel between the families of York and Lancaster over the right to occupy the English throne brought on a series of cruel civil wars in England in the years 1455 to 1485. The emblem of the Yorkists was a white rose and that of Lancasterians a red rose.

40. Cromwellian War: This war was fought between Cavaliers and Roundheads. Those who supported Charles I were called Cavaliers and those who supported Parliament were called Roundheads because some of them shaved their heads. While the king was staging skirmishes with the Parliament on a regular basis, there came Oliver Cromwell in 1644 and fought the battle of Marston Moor and the battle of Naseby. He apprehended the king, tried him, found him guilty as "a tyrant, traitor, murderer and public enemy" and had had his head chopped off. "Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage," 1999, p.430 by G. S. Thind.

41. Take a single state, viz. Punjab, according to Sir Denzil Ibbetson in his 'Punjab Castes' first published in 1916 based on the Census of the Punjab carried out in 1881, the following tribes were noted as criminal tribes in British India. These were 'Wandering and Criminal Tribes' such as: Od, Beldar, Changar,

Bawaria, Aheri, Thori, Sansi, Pakhiwara, Jhabel, Kehal, Gangra, Mina, Harni etc. Fact of the matter is that the High Castes considered these poorest of the poor homeless people as outcastes and that stigma earned them the name 'criminals'. Shunned by the stonehearted High Caste Hindus and Sikhs, some of them found solace and self-respect in embracing Islam and Christianity; now they are just as good law abiding citizens as

any High Caste Indians.

42. Rather than civilizing and rendering medical aid to the aborigines and the untouchables, the Hindus punish them for accepting help from the Christian Missionaries. While I was in New Delhi in the month of June, 2000, I was astounded to observe in The Times of India that in a fit of jealousy and a fanatical fervour, Hindus had murdered a Christian Missionary by the name of George Kuzikandam in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. To warn other poverty stricken people of that area and punish the Christians further, the police near the Uttar Pradesh town of Mathura murdered 23 year-old Vijay Ekka who had been converted to Christianity by Rev. Kuzikandam. Police maintained that the young man had committed suicide while in custody. In order to hush up the heinous crime, which could trigger religious riots and condemnation from other democracies of the world, the higher ups suspended a High Caste Hindu police officer, probably for a few days. It is an admitted fact that 99% of the poor people do not embrace this religion or that for the sake of love, but they do so out of desperation because of hunger, disease and/or better future.

43. The Aryans called Dravidians or aborigines who belonged to Moenjodaro era as *Anaryans* (an=not - aryas=Aryans). As the Aryans poured into India, they devastated aborigine's great civilization, peaceful way of living and pushed them to the south. Those who were not lucky enough to escape the tyranny were turned into *Shudras* by devising a godly affair of *Varna* (Caste) and *Chaturvarna* (Four Castes) i.e. *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vashiya* and *Shudra*, *Shudras* being the lowliest of the low in categorization. Five thousand years later, Gandhi a fanatical *Vaishiya* who claimed himself to be a Mahatma and a reformer

rather than reforming his own Hindu Society and urging upon them to emphasize oneness of mankind, consider *Shudras* as a part and parcel of their society and start inter-dining and intermarriages with them, he renamed them as *Harijans* (see f/n No. 1). Gandhi was clever enough to fathom that if he tried to reform Hindu Society, not only the Hindus but also the Indian National Congress would have disowned him. 'Our Indian-Sub-

Continent Heritage,' 1999, pp 67-73, f/n p.240 by G. S. Thind.

44. British had felt the pulse of the Indian Society. All they had to keep in mind was to make the Caste System stronger than ever before to rule over the Caste ridden society. In the very beginning of the East India Company, the British had hired Mahars (*Shudra's* i.e. untouchables) to defend them. As the British established themselves they planned to hire High Caste Hindus, including of course, the Sikhs, who refused to work with the Mahars for fear of becoming polluted. Hindus were forbidden by the *Manusmriti*, Manu's law-book, to not even let themselves be exposed to a *Shudra's* shadow, but the Sikhs also bypassed Guru Nanak's teachings of brotherhood of mankind and did not want to be polluted by the touch of the *Mahars* i.e. *Shudras*. At a later stage, the British were smart enough to establish Mazhabi (Sikh dehumanising appellation for *Chuhra*, untouchable) Sikh Regiments, because they were proven to be just as good if not better fighters than touchable Sikhs. See "Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage" pp. 292-293 by G. S. Thind.

45. Hindus are taken to be tolerant people because of diversity of religious thoughts and variety of religions customs and ceremonies amongst various sections of Hindus. Hindus tolerate it all as it is harmless and does not touch their Caste System or faith in gods and goddesses. Any system or thought that attacks Caste System or belief system is not tolerated by them. That is why no book on materialistic view of the world system is available nor do we find any book attacking Caste System. Hindus are intolerant towards Muslim, Christian and Sikh religions because their holy books condemn Caste System and they are ever ready to embrace the so called low castes people i.e. *Dalits*.

46. William Morris (1834-96) was British craftsman, poet, painter and political activist. In 1884 he helped found the Socialist League.

47. Do all the Sikhs have courage to assert their independence by breaking barriers of Caste? The answer is, definitely not. Sikhism is just as timid a victim of Caste System as Hinduism. If the children happen to choose their mates and parents agree

under pressure, relatives reject and in many cases threaten to boycott or even do not attend the wedding ceremony. In Sikh history of five hundred years, not very many inter-caste marriages have taken place, let alone between *Mazhabi* Sikhs (a Sikh appellation for *Shudra* or *Chuhra*) and others.

48. The tragedy is that it is not only the High Castes who enforce caste restrictions on its members and others, the lower castes are worse in this respect. Any member of the low caste daring to break the caste rules to the detriment of the High Castes is punished more by low castes than the high castes. In this respect, low caste *Panchayats* have been acting more vigorously to preserve Caste System than others or even the Government of the Hindus.

49. This was proved beyond doubt by the Gujarat earthquake of 26 January 2001. Relief camps were organized on caste basis and relief supplies distributed according to the caste of the receiver. "An earthquake can destroy anything except the barriers of Caste," was the comment by a foreign journalist who visited the affected area.

50. Almost each big Caste in any state of India runs or dominates one political party or at least a faction of a party. Most of the lieutenants of big leaders belong to their Castes. By the end of 20th century there was no state leader even in any state acceptable to majority of all the castes in that state not to speak of an All-India leader of any stature having confidence of all the Castes. No person belonging to a minority however brilliant he may be can hope, in normal circumstances, to be a top leader acceptable to majority caste, in preference to a leader of their own caste.

Regional considerations have compounded the evil. For

example a Tamil Brahmin leader may not be acceptable to Brahmins of the neighbouring states of Kerala, Andhra or Karnataka.

That is why no reform movement had an All-India impact after Buddhism. *Arya Smaj*, *Brahma Smaj*, *Prarthana Smaj*, Rama Krishna Mission etc. etc. have not been able to attract followers from all castes and from all states of India. Even

the Ten Gurus of the Sikhs had no following beyond High Castes of Punjab. The low castes of Punjab have turned to Sikhism due to imitation effect of dominant *Jat* Sikh Caste rather than acceptance of that faith for the love of it.

The result of all the above tendencies is that henceforth, not to speak of the central Government of India, there will be no single-party Government even in any state. The Governments will be formed by coalition of parties having basis in Castes/regions and to that extent the administration will be weak and less effective.

51. As I (author) have mentioned in many places in my book 'Our Indian-Subcontinent Heritage,' approximately one third of the population of India comprises of Untouchables i.e. *Shudras*, tribes and aborigines. If caste system causes inadequacies in ways of life of Indians, we might as well add another one fifth of the population of India to the poorest of the poor because Muslims, Christians, Mazhabi Sikhs etc. who were also rejects of Hindus. Unfortunately on conversion they did not become Sultans and Popes respectively on conversion; they became *Mussalis* of Christians, *Dindars* of the Muslims and outcastes for Sikhs. In consideration of this reasoning more than 50% of the population of India is under privileged.

52. Aryan Brotherhood of Dayanand who spoke against untouchability but in favour of *Chaturvarna*. The tragedy of social reform of Hindu society is that the reformer must speak about Caste System. The Hindus will themselves throw out a reformer as an iconoclast who wants to throw out this system. No body can support Caste System of Manu's type in this age of enlightenment. So they try to reinterpret the system in a new and devious way, but fail, naturally as the system itself is bad. This

happened to all reforming Hindus like Ram Mohan Roy, Vivakanand, Dayanand etc.

53. Arya Samajists' claim of their concept of *Chaturvarnya* (Four Caste) based on *Guna* (worth) and not on birth is nothing but hypocrisy and nonsense to muddle up the issue of Caste System just as Gandhi confused the *Shudras* by renaming them as *Harijans* (God's children), Sikhs' slighting of Guru Nanak's

teachings of 'oneness of mankind' by renaming the *chuhra*s (Punjabi name for *Shudras*) as *Mazhabi* Sikhs and Muslim's renaming of *Chuhra*s as *Deendar*. Let alone intermarriages amongst *Arya Samajis* and *Shudras*, not one *Shudra* has been admitted to *Arya Samaj* since its inception in 1875 because no one belonging to any of thousands of castes and sub-castes had the audacity to come in the open and let it be known to one and all of his co-caste people that the newly convert *Shudra* to Hinduism was part and parcel of them.

54. For that matter Sikhs also should ponder over unlearning all this. In North America it's up to the coming generations to emancipate themselves from the dictates of the outmoded Indian traditions such as Caste System, degradation of women i.e. ordinance of sanctions on free and lawful movements of women, issuing of edicts to seclude and virtually make slaves out of women under the camouflage of religion, traditions, culture and customs. The Sikh community is becoming a laughing stock of the white Canadians due to interference by parents and in-laws in the lives of married children resulting in beatings and murders of women. It is not out of place to mention that arranged marriages and consequent escalation of divorce rate is on the rise more than ever before. At the root are the feelings of caste.

55. *Sikh Jats* (farming community of the Punjab) got rid of the supremacy of the Brahmins and *Kshatriyas* and threw the derogatory appellation '*Vaishya*' in the garbage can during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler who himself did not believe in Caste or creed. Bibi Gulbahar Begum, a Muslim, was his favourite wife; he did not impress upon her to change her religion or her name giving an inkling that unlike Hinduism Sikh faith was not bound by caste or a Muslim name. On the contrary

they started to call Brahmins as fortune telling beggars, going door to door for alms by telling hocus-pocus stories of deception.

56. Plato was born in Athens in about 428 B.C. He devoted himself to philosophy and teaching. He opened the Academy and remained with it as a teacher until his death in about 348 B.C. It is good luck of the West that it did not take his theory of

mankind seriously. He had even justified slavery.

57. *Manusmriti* XII. 4. of the Hindus says,

"If the *Shudra* intentionally listens for committing to memory the Veda, then his ears should be filled with (molten) lead and lack (a resinous secretion of the lack insect); if he utters Veda, then his tongue should be cut off; if he has mastered the Veda his body should be cut to pieces."

Hindu God Lord Rama charged *Shudra* Rishi Shambook under the above section of *Manusmriti* and beheaded him.

58. The Arya Smajists never left the Caste into which they were born nor did they help/force anybody to change his/her category due to his/her *guna*. They are indistinguishable from the rest of the Hindu population. Daya Nand, the founder of *Arya Smaj* was born in Gujarat State but had some following amongst Punjabi Hindus only who were even otherwise unorthodox due to Sikh/Muslim influence.

59. H. G. Wells (1866-1946), an author of over 100 books, in his 'The Outline of History,' writes:

"Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history.... The name of Ashoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star."

Maurya Dynasty started by Ashoka's grandfather Chandragupa came into being from about 320 B.C. and lasted to 700 A.D; it spread all over Indian Sub-Continent and Afghanistan and became to be known as Buddhist period of tolerance towards other religions. Unfortunately, fanatical Talibans have destroyed sandstone statues of Buddha claiming those to be against teachings of Islam. The statues had been

carved in the mountainside in the 3rd and 5th centuries, way before Islam was even born.

60. '*Brahmanical Periods*' c. 2500-300 B.C. and 700 A.D to Sultan Mahmud a Persian Muslim's invasions of India from 1000 A.D onwards, were responsible for all the social evils of India; *Shudras* suffered the most.

61. Of all the religions of the world, it is only the Hindu religion, which sanctions discrimination between man and man.

All other religions preach brotherhood of mankind. If the ideal is wrong, how can the practice be correct? That is why while other societies are united and consolidated, the Hindu Society is fragmented and disunited.

62. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was a Scottish historian and essayist. He authored many books, out of which the most famous was, "Past and Present" attacking England's social and political ills.

63. This is not the case with Sikhs. Perhaps Dr. Ambedkar did not know fully about the Caste-consciousness amongst the Sikhs. The Sikhs are almost as great a victim of Caste-consciousness as the Hindus in the matter of inter-dinning with the *Shudras* and inter-Caste marriages amongst various castes of the Sikhs. Untouchability is observed even inside the *Gurdwaras* in rural Punjab and Low-Caste Sikhs have their separate *Gurdwaras* even in Western countries like UK, USA and Canada.

64. Sikh intelligentsia of India in general and North America in particular, should ponder over these questions.

65. It must be born in mind that as the Aryans poured into India over five thousand years ago and became strong militarily in Northern part of India, they squeezed the aborigines (Dravidians) to the South. Unfortunately those who could not escape were turned into *Shudras*. Those were the same people of Moenjodaro era who belonged to a peace loving sophisticated society unparalleled in the world of those times. Brahmins of South were and still are much superior in intelligence than those of the North.

Peace, art and centres of learning have nothing common

with violence; when Halaku Khan captured Baghdad in 1258 A.D., crowds of scholars with their books, inkpots and pen fled from Baghdad to Cairo and Spain. (see 'Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage,' p 330 & f/n by G. S. Thind

66. Many Caste ridden families in India and even in Canada, UK and America might as well kill their child rather than let him/her marry the person of his/her choosing from amongst

other Castes.

67. For that matter Sikhs are just as guilty as the Hindus; inter-dining and inter-marriage with *Mazhabi Sikhs* (who before embracing Sikhism were called *Chuhra*s, a Punjabi name for *Shudra*s) is out of question, and even inter-marriage between people of same caste from different regions of Punjab is also frowned upon.

68. To be fair to the Hindus who constitute more than 70% of the population of India, the Indian constitution and its laws are secular. In fact this is what the Government of India tells the outside world when the question of treatment of the Untouchables of India is raised at international forum.

But law comes into the life of man only occasionally while religion regulates life from moment to moment. Religion touches the conscience of man while law touches only his brain. Religion controls emotional part of man, his sub-conscience, which controls his behaviour in the ultimate analysis. If there is clash between the dictates of religion and that of law, religion will have the upper hand. That is why in spite of India being a secular state, its citizens are swayed by religion and we have caste and religious riots so often. Every Hindu is guilty of observing untouchability in his/her day-to-day life in spite of its being abolished under the constitution of India and there being a substantive law making the act of untouchability an offence. This is because the notion of the untouchability is inculcated in the mind of the Hindu by his/her religion. With the Hindus, observing caste and untouchability is a matter of habit inculcated right from birth, at home, in the neighbourhood and in the temple. The schools are a reflection of society, so the students

copy their parents at school too and the school administrations are silent on most occasions on this issue or many even side with the dominant High Castes. This is the reason why we don't have any anti-untouchability agitations from any quarter of India; we hear only of discriminatory treatment meted out to the Depressed Classes by the High Castes. Just as well-intentioned and well drafted laws are no obstacles to the corrupt mind in their misapplication, there is no difficulty in the minds polluted by

religion in evading or breaking the laws protecting the Depressed Classes, especially when their religion sanctions such oppression under Caste System.

69. Albert Venn Dicey - (1835-1922) an Oxford jurist whose 'Lecture Introductory to the Study of the Law of the Constitution' (1885) is itself considered part of the British constitution, which is an amalgam of several written and unwritten authorities. For this treatise he drew on his knowledge of constitutionalism in U.S.A. as well as UK.

Prof. Dicey taught law at the U of Oxford (1882-1909) and served as principal of the Working Men's College, London (1899-1912). Between 1886 and 1913 he wrote four books opposing Home Rule for Ireland. In 1905 he published his Lectures on the Relation Between Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century.

70. Leslie Stephen - (1832-1904) was a British biographer, editor of 'The Dictionary of National Biography,' wrote lives of some prominent personalities such as Pope and numerous essays and sketches on 18th and 19th century literature.

71. Karl Marx (1818-83) a journalist and philosopher was a German Jew and as a result of producing the Communist Manifesto in 1847, was expelled from his former north Germany State, Prussia. He settled in London in 1849 and produced a theory of social change, dialectical materialism, and believed that violent revolution by the poorest class of working people is necessary to create a classless society, and also that history was the result of economic forces. In case of India, Manu had devised his Caste System so foolproof that poor could never stage violent revolution; he (Manu) happened to be smarter than Karl Marx.

72. In modern India, instead of classical fourfold division of the Hindus, there are thousands of Castes and Tribes, with varying standards of living, life styles and professions etc. with various points of contact with each other. However there is one big wall that separates all their castes into two categories, viz. the wall of untouchability. The "Touchable" castes are better off in the matters of education, means of production (productive assets) control of political and administrative machinery, accessibility to

better paying professions etc. There may be very few inter-caste marriages amongst them, inter-dinning is quite common due to modern life style. They are now all vested interests in keeping the "untouchable" castes out side the seat of power, and the stigma of Untouchability is enough to segregate these low castes victims of the adverse economic, social and administrative system of the country. Due to untouchability they are not welcome or successful in better paying professions like doctors, professors and lawyers etc. In villages they live in separate ghettos making a wretched living. In the field of politics where heads count, whereas the "touchable" castes being more educated and cultured, have state level and national level political parties, the untouchable castes being poor, scattered, resource less, uneducated and ignorant have no united voice in politics. Even leaders of the stature of Dr. Ambedkar could not create a powerful All-India party due to castes amongst untouchables. Each caste amongst the untouchable castes has its own leadership who can be easily played upon against one another by the clever and more resourceful High Caste leaders.

One great divisive force working against the united front of the untouchable castes is the presence of untouchability amongst all the castes of this category. There are no inter-caste marriages amongst the untouchable castes; there is not even inter-caste dinning. Thus the behaviour of the untouchable castes towards each other is much more deplorable in this respect and they are suffering on account of this disunity. The Untouchable low Castes are a minority as compared with Touchable Castes and disunity amongst them further weakens their position. That is why the Untouchables Castes have never been able to start any

agitation against discrimination and exploitation or create any pressure group at national level or even at any state level. For all practical purposes, English continues to be the link language between various parts of India. While higher education has enabled the High Castes to create all-India political parties by all India newspapers, the uneducated untouchables cannot communicate amongst themselves on all India basis. Lack of education has prevented the untouchables from participating in

the administration process of the country because most of the administration is carried through English language and they can be easily hoodwinked.

Thus the notion of Karl Marx about the clear-cut line between the exploiting class and the exploited class is not applicable to the Caste ridden Hindu society and that is the reason why there has never been any revolution in Indian history.

73. While going through Aeronautics Apprenticeship program in New Delhi from August 1946 to the beginning of 1950 I was amazed to hear from some of my liberal minded friends that whenever Mr. Nehru and Mr. Rajagopalachari, a Brahmin from South shook hands with Dr. Ambedkar, an Untouchable, in order to purify themselves of touching a *Shudra*, they sprinkled a palm-full of water on them on returning to their respective offices or homes. It is interesting to note that Mr. Rajagopalachari's ancestors themselves were humiliated, beaten and pushed to South by the Aryans five thousand years ago and those of their fellow men and women who could not make a move were turned into *Shudras*, the Untouchables, yet, a touch by Dr. Ambedkar was liable to pollute him.

74. In the year of 1017 A.D., Ramanuja, a Tailanga Brahmin, was born in the village of Perumbudar, about twenty-five miles west of Madras (Chennai). Ramanuja's Tamil name was Ilaya Perumal. Quite early in life, as Ramanuja lost his father, he went to Kanchipuram to further his study of Veda. The head of this important *Vaishnavite* institution was Yamunacharya, a great sage and profound scholar. One of Yamunacharya's disciples a *Shudra* by the name of Kanchipurna was serving in the temple.

At present there is a temple at Kancheepuram where Kanchipurna's image has been installed and where he is worshiped as a saint.

Young Ramanuja came under Kanchipurna's influence and had such reverence for him that he invited him to dinner in his house. Unfortunately, Kanchipurna came to dinner when Ramanuja was not at home and took his meals being served by Ramanuja's wife. When Ramanuja returned home, he found the

house washed and his wife bathing for becoming polluted by serving meals to the *Shudra*. This irritated Ramanuja very much and turned him against his wife who strictly believed in Caste System. After a few incidents of this nature, Ramanuja abandoned the life of a householder and became a *Sanyasi* (the one who gives up worldly affairs).

75. Saint Kabir was a weaver by Caste, which was and is still considered low in the society of the Indian Sub-Continent. Born in Benaras (now Varanasi), of Muslim parents, and probably about the year 1440, he became in early life a disciple of the celebrated Hindu ascetic Ramananda. Ramananda had brought to Northern India the religious revival Ramanuja, the great eleventh-century reformer of Brahmanism, had initiated in the South. Influenced by Ramananda and his Guru Ramanuja's secular approach towards mankind Kabir condemned Caste System in very strong terms in his various hymns and declared: *First God created light and then by his omnipotence made all the mortals. From the one light has welled up the entire universe. Then who is good and who is bad?*

The above hymn of Saint Kabir is so popular and of course, convincing that Sikhs repeat it every time they open the holy *Guru Granth* in the *Gurdwara* or at home. In consideration of the rampant Caste System being observed by the Sikhs, do they repeat the above hymn from the innermost of their hearts? Of course not, they condone Caste System just as much as Hindus, despite the fact that unlike Hindu *Shastras* (scripture), Sikh Holy *Granth* is full of condemnation of Caste and Caste System. Unfortunately Saint Kabir being from low caste could not set up an example of inter-marriage between his kith and kin

and High Castes; the only route he could take was to politely and humbly put the High Castes to shame for discriminating against his people, the *Shudras*. Saint Kabir's appeals to achieve 'Human Rights' for his people did not make a dent even in Sikhs' attitude towards Caste System.

Of the Smriti and its devastating effect on the people, Kabir says:

*Smriti, the offshoot (daughter) of the Vedas,
Hath forged new chains, new bonds (yokes).
She hath bound down her own city-folks.
With the bonds of attachment, and aimed at them, the shafts of death.
These bonds are loosed not, nor are they snapped.
Yea, like the serpent, she bites the
whole world (India) to death.
Within my sight, the whole world was beguiled.
"But I was saved," sayeth Kabir, "by Uttering the Name of the Lord".*

(G. Granth p. 329 - Translation of by Dr. Gopal Singh)

76. Let us face it, it's futile to beat around the bush and waver to admit the fact that Gurus did not leave any practical example of inter-marriages between their *Khatri* kith and kin and their *Vaishyas* (farming community) who happened to be a majority of their followers, let alone the lowest of the low *Shudras*, yet it is comforting to read from the *Guru Granth* that unlike Hindu *Shastras*, *Shrutis* and *Smritis* it is full of condemnation of Caste System. If our ancestors could not muster up courage to physically mutilate the Caste System, our coming generations will get rid of it in not too distant future whereas Hindus have no chance of a relief from the cancer of Caste due to condoning of Caste by their Caste ridden Scriptures.

77. Jaimini who composed *Sutras* (collection of rules) was an interpreter of Vedic thought during *Brahminical* period about 3rd century B.C. For Jaimini, performance of Vedic sacrifices is conducive to the attainment of heavens; he emphasises that nothing is a duty unless it is instrumental to happiness in the long run.

78. Edmund Burke (1729-97). Burke was born in Dublin, Ireland. Being the son of an attorney, he was persuaded to study law but he abandoned his legal studies to take up literary work. In 1765 he became private secretary to Lord Rockingham, the prime minister, and was elected to Parliament. His speeches, which were often long essays, have become classics.

His stand for compromise with the rebellious American Colonies was evident in "On American Taxation" (1774) and

"On Conciliation with Colonies" (1775). If Britain had adopted the political policies of Edmund Burke, the history of the United States might have been different. During a debate in Parliament on taxing the American Colonies, a member asked, "Should not America belong to this country?" Burke replied: "If we have equity, wisdom, and justice, it will belong to this country; if we have it not, it will not belong to this country." Burke summed up 18th-century liberalism.

In the 1780s Burke also came forward as the champion of the people of India, where East India Company had created an extensive empire. He moved for the impeachment of Warren Hastings, governor-general of India, charging him with abuse of the people. Burke retired as the Hastings trial was ending. King George II wished to make him a peer, but, depressed by the death of his only son, Burke would only accept pension.

79. It is noteworthy that the Brahmins have not been able to produce any thinker of the calibre of Martin Luther (see f/n 29), Erasmus Desiderius (c.1466-1536), Voltair (c.1694-1778). Under Caste System Brahmins reserved education to themselves and naturally therefore we should not expect any other caste to produce any thinker with new ideas. But why did the Brahmins fail in this respect?

The main reason is that the Brahmins, the educators of the Hindus, are a class of hereditary priests. This made them vested interest in keeping the people ignorant and superstitious by cock-and-bull stories, which fill the Hindu scriptures. As they came from the same background, with same attendant circumstances, same rights and privileges, same interests and fears, given the same set of education for preparation for life,

they fell victims to hackneyed thinking in ruts. There was no need for any of them to challenge the given mode of thinking as it would go against their own personal interests and the interests of the class to which they belonged. On the other hand in the West, priesthood as a profession was open to all classes of people, whether nobles, middle class or working class. It is necessary to remember that in olden times, education was limited to priestly class, whether in the East or in the West, there being

no scheme of education for the public in general. So, thinkers had to come from amongst the priests as we see from the history of philosophy in the West. As even children from the depressed and exploited sector of the Western society could become priest, even if at the lowest level, they had chance to get the best of education in seminaries or otherwise and later rise to higher position in the hierarchy of the church. There was no stigma of caste or class to stand in the way of their progress. So people coming to priestly class from different background brought fresh ideas to be developed and propagated, leading to cross-fertilisation of ideas. Priestly class in the West were the best record keepers of what went around them while the Brahmins kept no record of historical facts lest their scheme of things gets exposed. Even in the matter of spirituality, the system of *Gurudom* based on secrecy was developed to the detriment of general spiritual education. All this led to progress of ideas in the West but stagnation in India.

80. For that matter how many Sikh priests in India in general and the West in particular hold theological degrees as compared to Christian priests? As compared to Christian priests who usually hold two degrees, one from a regular university and the other from a theological college, Sikh priests and songsters commuting back and forth between India and the West are mostly school dropouts. Rather than bringing harmony amongst our people, they create misunderstandings, misgivings and conflicts between clean-shaven Sikhs and *Khalsas* (Sikhs with beards and turbans) as dictated by interest groups, which sponsor them. They have never spoken in favour of inter-dinning, inter-marriages between so called High Castes and low-castes and

against Caste System, arranged marriages, dowry, because they do not come with a missionary spirit; their mission is to fetch donations and some even vanish to marry a local woman to stay in Canada or slip into America. Children born in the West gain nothing from them so far as religion is concerned.

81. Thanthai E.V.R. Periyar, a *Shudra* contemporary of Dr. Ambedkar, The Founder of Self Respect Movement in South India, regarded Brahmanism as a curse to the human race. He

was sarcastic enough to say, '.... see a Brahmin and a snake, kill the Brahmin first.' He was an iconoclast in religious matters. As a result of awakening of his down trodden and illiterate people, Brahmin dominated Indian National Congress was defeated for the first time ever in the State of Tamilnadu.

82. George Washington Carver (1860-1943). In the American Civil War, raiders swept through South Western Missouri. They seized a slave mother and her baby boy on Moses Carver's Diamond Grove farm near Diamond, Mo. Carver reportedly got the baby back in exchange for a \$300 racehorse, but the mother was not found. The slaveholder named the motherless child George Washington Carver.

Young Carver did not grow strong enough to work in the fields, but he did household chores. In the garden he made plants flourish. He had been freed from slavery for several years before he left the Carvers to get an education. Doing cooking, laundry, and odd jobs, he worked his way through high school in Kansas. He then earned his way at Simpson College at Indianola, Iowa, and State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now Iowa State University) at Ames. He got his M.S. (Master of Science) agriculture in 1896. Carver's achievements with plants brought him to the attention of another Black (prior to abolition of slavery they were called by a degrading appellation of 'Negro') Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Carver became head of Tuskegee's agriculture department in 1896. In his 47 years there, the great plant scientist did notable work in scientific agriculture and chemurgy (the industrial use of raw products from plants). He made hundreds of useful products from peanuts and sweet potatoes alone.

Carver was in addition a painter and a musician. In 1940 he gave his life savings towards establishing the George Washington Carver Foundation for research in agriculture chemistry. Ten years after his death in Tuskegee on January 5, 1943, Carver's birthplace was dedicated as a national monument.

Who said, unlike High Caste Hindus of India and American Slave Masters with unlimited resources, lowly and underprivileged *Shudras*/Slaves could not achieve excellence in

education if given an opportunity? *Shudras* and Blacks have proven themselves to be just as intelligent if not better. Accepting this principle Americans have opened doors to Blacks (who form about 12% of the population of America) at an unprecedented rate. City of New Orleans has named its airport as 'Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport' to honour the late jazz great's 100th birthday. Gen. Colin Powel, Secretary of State, Ms. Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Internal Security, Mr. Justice Clarence Thomas, Judge of Supreme Court of America and Pierre-Richard Prosper is Ambassador at large for War Crimes are few examples of recent recognition of Blacks by America, whereas *Dalits* who form more than 30% of the population of India have no such representations in the Government of India. There is not even one *Dalit* out of nine High Caste judges of the Supreme Court of India. Some Hindu critics of my research may point out that the President of India is a *Dalit*. My answer to them is that if semi-literate Giani Zail Singh, a Sikh who was virtually put under house arrest by the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, during 1984 riots against Sikhs, could be put on the pedestal by Congress as a show piece of equal treatment to the minorities, Kocheril Raman Narayanan, a *Dalit*, is one of the most educated and ablest persons in India. The position of the President in India is ceremonial if not as a 'rubber stamp'. Caste ridden India has mastered a good trick to fool the world by lavishing unimportant posts to the minorities once in a while. Hindus have mastered the art of hiding caste system in a water tight compartment with 'one-way looking glass walls'; no foreign critics can detect this cruelty and they dare to call this violation of Human Rights an "internal affair".

83. John Dewey (1859-1952) was one of the most notable American philosophers of the 20th century. He attended the University of Vermont and John Hopkins University. In 1884 he went to the University of Michigan as an instructor in philosophy and psychology. From 1894 to 1904 he headed a department of philosophy, psychology, and education at the University of Chicago. In 1904 Dewey moved to Columbia University in New York City as professor of philosophy. He remained there for the

rest of his teaching career. He was a great exponent of pragmatism, a philosophy for life.

Dewey regarded the school as a community - a part of society. He looked upon education as a process of living, not as preparation for later living. His writings include 'Democracy and Education' (1916), 'Reconstruction in Philosophy' (1920), and 'Experience and Nature' (1925).

Such a great university was the Columbia University and its professors; yet fanatic, ignorant and jealous High Caste Hindus of Dr. Ambedkar's times ridiculed Columbia University as an inferior university only because Ambedkar, a *Shudra*, had attained an excellence in education at that university. (Also see "Our Indian Sub-Continent Heritage." P. 344 by G. S. Thind.)

84. This is evident from the history of struggle between science and religion in the West. As science (physical science, astronomy, biology, geology and psychology etc.) discovered new facts and ideas and challenge the old thinking of the church, religion retreated and reformed itself to be in line with the new discoveries, albeit grudgingly. This led to reforms all round and the West made rapid progress while Islamic and Hindu societies stagnated because they looked backward for their view of life.

85. In this sentence what Gandhi is trying to drive at is that since a Hindu Prince paid for Dr. Ambedkar's education, he should have killed his conscience, not uttered a word to uplift his downtrodden flock and instead geared his intellect towards the praise of the High Castes who turned his people into *Shudras*, (untouchables) five thousand years ago and made them to work worst than animals in lieu of crumbs and discarded clothes. This sort of mean spirited thinking and expectation by Mr. Gandhi

peevd off many intelligent people of India.

86. *Savarna* Hindus are those Hindus who form the Brahmin, *Kshtriya* and *Vaishya* Castes i.e. High Castes, were and are still *Savarnas* and Gandhi himself was no exception. Rather than reforming Hindu religion, Gandhi renamed the untouchables from *Shudras* to *Harijans*, an appellation just as derogatory as *Shudra*. It took 25 years for Dr. Ambedkar to get rid of the appellation of '*Harijan*' (see note #1) and that also after Gandhi's

death.

87. Gandhi never felt abashed by making such ambiguous statements. Fact of the matter was that 95% of the *Shudras* who were and still are one third of the population of India had accepted Dr. Ambedkar as their leader, that was the only reason why crafty Hindus of the Punjab living 1600 kilometres away from Bombay had invited him to preside over their *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* Conference. In fact Gandhi's *Harijans* bought with '*Harijan Fund*' through his lackeys like Jagjiwan Ram, a *Shudra*, were a minority. '*Harijan Fund*' was deviously set up by Gandhi to be distributed as a dole among the *Harijan* leaders to keep rank and file of their folks aligned to him and his Indian National Congress. Dr. Ambedkar denounced Gandhi for veering his people from demanding social justice, equal status, better education and better jobs. Dr. Ambedkar believed in teaching a person "how to fish," rather than dole out a fish to the hungry once in a while.

88. It's hard to comprehend how Indians could believe in illogical reasoning of Gandhi; he had thrown logic out of the window in the above twenty lines. Queer ancient beliefs as prescribed in the so called ancient scriptures have such an overbearing hold on Hindu society that the late Morarji Desai, Prime Minister of India once boasted of drinking of his own urine and called it an ancient therapy; lo behold! all quack medicine-men of India started to praise the 'urine therapy', no body ever questioned the scientific aspect of that dirty practice. Even the news media of India started to praise the ancient prescription of ancient India. In the Western World people used to poke fun at East-Indians in the parties by saying "would you

like Canadian or 'Indian' drink?" However, it died in no time.

89. That was how Gandhi used to muddle up the issues to fool the illiterate masses. He cunningly sidestepped the issue of *Shudra* by mixing it with the tradesmen. Tradesmen, the *Vaishyas* were one step higher than the *Shudras* and were not hit that hard by the Caste System. It was the poor *Shudras* who were made to carry human excrement from the Indian type toilets and carry it on their heads in dripping baskets. It was the *Shudra* who

was made to remove dead animals in lieu of crumbs and discarded clothes.

Manusmriti (Manus's law book) says:

1-91. One occupation only the lord prescribed to the *Shudra*: to serve meekly, these other three castes (*Brahmin*, *Kshtriya*, *Vaishya*).

X -125. The remnants of their food must be given to him (*Shudra*), as well as their old clothes, the refuge of their grain and their old household furniture.

It were the *Shudras*, who were barred from not only attending schools but also from listening to religious discourses or any other discussions pertaining to the welfare of the community as a whole. Unlike slaves of Rome (Italy) or America it was out of question for a *Shudra* to work in an Indian kitchen or around the house; even his shadow was liable to pollute the High Caste Hindus. The punishments for violation of those Caste laws were severe to the extent of pouring of lead into the ears of listeners of the religious discourses. Even today a *Shudra* does not dare to attend a High Caste Hindu temple in Gandhi's model village of Sewagram. Gandhi when intermingling the worth of a *Shudra* with Tradesmen must have been temporarily suffering from psychosis. Gandhi himself being a fanatic *Bania* miserably failed in the analysis of Dr. Ambedkar's thesis. *Shudras* were barred from listening to religious discourses; yet for Gandhi, Caste and religion had nothing in common. Yes, a person with dead conscience could accept that logic and there are enough such Indians to put India to shame.

Far from being ashamed of untouchability, the Hindus

tried to defend it; for that matter they still try to defend it in the twenty-first century. The line of their defence was that the Hindus had never upheld slavery as other nations had done and that in any case, untouchability was not worse than slavery. No doubt, there was slavery in Rome and later on in America, but their living and working conditions were thousand times better than that of the *Shudras* of India, who polluted every thing they touched. Mr. Barrow in his 'Slavery in the Roman Empire,' pp.

47-49 says: "Hitherto it is the repulsive side of household slavery that has been sketched. There is also another aspect. The literature reveals the vast household as normal. It is, of course, the exception. Large slave staffs undoubtedly existed, and they are generally to be found in Rome. In Italy and the Provinces there was less need of display; many of the staff of the Villa were engaged in productive work connected with land and its produce. The old-fashioned relationship between foreman and slave remained there; the slave was often a fellow worker. The kindliness of Pliny (c. A.D. 61-113), Roman politician and writer towards his slave staff is well known. It is no spirit of self-righteousness, and in no wish to appear in a favourable light in the eyes of the future generations, which he hoped would read his letters that he tells of his distress at the illness and death of his slaves. The household (of Pliny) is the slaves' republic. Pliny's account of his treatment of his slaves is sometimes regarded as so much in advance of general or even occasional practice as to be valueless as evidence.

From reasons both of display and genuine literary interest, the rich families attached to their household, slaves trained in literature and art. One Clavisices is said to have had eleven slaves taught to recite Homer, Hesiod, and nine lyric poets by heart. Apart from few abuses, educated slaves must have been a necessity in the absence of printing invention...The busy lawyer, the dilettante poet, the philosopher and educated gentlemen of literary tastes and need of copyists and readers and secretaries. Amanuenses (one employed to take dictation or to copy manuscript) were common enough; librarians are to be found in public and private libraries....Shorthand was in

common use under the Roman Empire, and slave *Notarii* (notaries) were regularly employed. Many freemen (freed slaves), rhetoricians and grammarians are collected by Snetonius in a special treatise. Verrius Flaccus, (a slave) was tutor to Austu's (a king) grandsons, and at death was publicly honoured by a statue. Hyginus (a slave) was librarian of the Palatine Library, in which office Julius Modestus, his own freeman followed him. We hear of freemen historians of a slave

philosopher who was encouraged to argue with his master, friends of slaves and freed architects.

Freemen as doctors occur frequently in the inscriptions, some of them specialists, they had been trained in big households as slaves, as is shown by one or two examples; after Manumission they rose to eminence and became notorious for their high fees.

"The tastes of some section of society demanded that dancers, singers, musicians, mountebanks (A game in which each player bets that one of two cards will be matched by the dealer before the other one), variety artists, athletic trainers and messieurs should be forthcoming. All these are to be found in slavery, often trained by teachers who had acquired some reputation." 'Slavery in the Roman Empire,' p. 63 by Mr. Barrow.

"The activities of slaves in commerce are innumerable; number of them are shopkeepers selling every variety of food, bread, meat, salt, fish, wine, vegetables, beans, aupine-seed, honey, curd, ham, ducks and fresh fish; others deal in clothing - sandals, shoes, gowns and mantles. In Rome, they plied their trade in the neighbourhood of the Circus Mamimus, or the Porticus Trigeminus; or the Esquiline Market, or the Great Mart (on the Caolian Hill) or the Suburra." "Slavery in the Roman Empire," p. 105 by Mr. Barrow.

Now we examine excerpts from 'The Story of Civilization,' (Part III. pp. 22; 66 Festival Saturnalia December 17th to the 23rd; 80; 95 and 99 respectively) by Prof. W. Durant (1885-1981), a great Historian and author of 20th century. Shedding a bit of light on the Roman slaves from 508-264 B.C. Durant says: ".... Sometimes he managed his master's property,

business, or funds; sometimes he became a teacher, writer, actor, craftsman, labourer, tradesman, or artist, and paid his master part of his earnings. In this or other ways he might earn enough to buy his freedom and become a member of the plebs (a member of the lower class; a plebeian.).... . The Saturnalia ran from the 17th to the 23rd; they celebrated the sowing of the seed of the next year and commemorated the happy classless reign of Saturn; gifts were exchanged, and many liberties were allowed;

the distinction between slave and free was for a while abolished or even inverted; slaves might sit down with their owners, give orders to them, rail at them; the masters waited upon their slaves, and did not eat till all the slaves were filled..... . Industry was in the hands of independent craftsmen, working in their separate shops. Most such men were freemen, but an increasing proportion was freedmen or slaves. Labour was highly differentiated, and produced for the market rather than for the individual customer. Competition by slaves depressed the wages of free workers, and reduced the proletariat to a bitter life in slums. Strikes among these men were impracticable and rare, but slave uprisings were frequent; the "First Servile War" (139-B.C.) was not the first. ... The invading Greeks found a strategic opening in the schools and lecture halls of Rome. A swelling stream of Graeculi - Greek-lings," as the scornful Romans called them-followed the armies returning from the East. Many of them, as slaves, became tutors in Rome families; some, the *grammatici* (specialists in grammar), inaugurated secondary education in Rome by opening schools for instruction in the language and literature of Greece; some, the *rehetores* (orators), gave private instruction and public lectures on oratory, literary composition, and philosophy. Roman orators -even Cato (Marcus Porcius (the Elder), general and patriot 234-149 B.C.) - began to model their addresses on the speeches of Lysias (459-380 B.C.), Aeschines (389-314 B.C.), and Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.)..... . The best feature of the Roman stage was the acting. The leading part was usually played by the manager, freeman; the other performers were mostly Greek slaves."

Let us turn to the de facto position of the Negro in

America during the period in which he was slave in the eyes of the law. Prof. Charles Spurgeon Johnson (1893-1956), American sociologist, head of Fisk University in his "Negro in American Civilization," says:

"Lafayette ((1757-1834): among the heroes of the American Revolution only the name of George Washington ranks above that of Lafayette. He belonged to one of the old noble families of France. At the tender age of 19 when Lafayette

was a captain in the French army, he heard that American colonies had declared their independence from England, France's old foe. Defying orders from his awkward and timid King Louis XVI, he purchased a ship and sailed for America in 1777. He offered to serve the American government without pay. The Congress gave him the rank of major general. He proved to be a good officer and wise advisor. He himself had observed that white and black seamen and soldiers had fought and messed together in the Revolution without bitter difference. Down in Granville County, North Carolina, a full-blooded Negro, John Chavis, educated in Princeton University, was conducting a private school for white students and was a licentiate under the local Presbytery to white congregation in the State. One of his pupils became Governor of North Carolina, another the State's most prominent Whig senator. Two of his pupils were sons of the Chief Justice of North Carolina. The father of the founder of the greatest military Academy of the State attended his school and boarded in his home.... Slave labour was used for all kinds of work and the more intelligent of the Negro slaves were trained as artisans to be leased. Slave artisans would bring twice as much as an ordinary field hand in the market. Master craftsmen owned their staff. Some masters, as the system became more involved, hired slaves to their slave artisans. Many slave artisans purchased their freedom by the savings allowed them above the normal labour expected.

A Census of free Negroes in Richmond County, Georgia, in 1819 showed carpenters, barbers, boat corks, saddlers, spinners, millwrights, holsters, weavers, harness makers, sawmill attendants and steamboat pilots. A Negro

shoemaker made by hand the boots in which President Munroe was inaugurated. Harriet Martineau marveled at the slave workmanship in the delicately tiled floor of Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello. In 1856 in Philadelphia, of 1637 Negro craftsmen recorded, less than two-third could use their trades; because of hostile prejudice. The Irish who were pouring into America from the very beginning of the nineteenth century were being used in the North on approximately the same motives of

preference, which governed Negro slavery. An Irish Catholic, it was argued in their favour, seldom attempts to rise to a higher condition than that in which he is placed, while the Negro often makes the attempt with success. Had not the old Puritan Oliver Cromwell, while the traffic in black slaves was on, sold all the Irish not killed in the Drogheda Massacre, into Barbados? Free and fugitive Negroes in New York and Pennsylvania were in constant conflict with this group and the bitter hostility showed itself most violently in the draft riots of the New York. These Hibernians controlled the hod (a metal pail for carrying coal) carrying and the common labour jobs, opposing every approach of the Negro as a menace to their slight hold upon America and upon a means of livelihood."

Such was the *de facto* condition of the Roman slave and the American Negro slave. Is there anything in the condition of the *Shudras* of India, which is comparable with the condition of the Roman slave and the American Negro slave? It would not be unfair to take the same period of time for comparing the condition of the *Shudras* with that of the slaves under the Roman Empire. But we must be prepared to compare the condition of the slaves in the Roman Empire to the condition of the *Shudras* of the twenty first century. It is a comparison between the worst of one side and the best of the other, for the present times are supposed to be the golden age for the *Shudras*. How does the *de facto* condition of the *Shudras* compare with the *de facto* condition of the slaves? How many *Shudras* are engaged, as the slaves in Rome were, in professions such as those of Librarians, Amanuenses, and Shorthand-writers? How many *Shudras* are

engaged, as the slaves in Rome were, in such intellectual occupations as those of rhetoricians, grammarians, philosophers, tutors, doctors and artists?

Can any High Caste dare to give an affirmative answer to anyone of these queries? During the last 50 years i.e. since the independence of India and today (December 25, 2000) of the 120 secretaries and 500 equivalent officers in the Union Government, hardly one or two were from the *Dalit (Shudra)* community. Out of nine Justices of the Supreme Court of India, not one is a

Shudra, though, *Shudras* represent one third of the population of India. On the Republic Day i.e., January 26, 2000, K. R. Narayanan, the President of India said: "There is need to ponder over the condition of not only women in society but of the *Dalits (Shudras)* and other weaker sections. Law has abolished untouchability, but shades of it remain in the ingrained attitudes nurtured by the caste system. Though the constitutional provision of reservation in educational institutions and public service flow from the constitution, these remain unfulfilled through bureaucratic and administrative deformation or by narrow interpretations of these special provisions. It seems, in the social realm, some kind of a counter-revolution is taking place in India. It is forgotten that these benefits have been provided not in the way of charity, but as human rights and as social Justice to a section of society who constitute a big chunk of our population." Is not the so-called High Caste intelligentsia morally bankrupt? The *Shudras* are completely shut out from any of these avenues in which the slaves found so large a place. This proves how futile is the line of defence adopted by the High Caste to justify Caste System and its by-product Untouchability.

Slavery, it must be admitted, was not a free social order, but can Untouchability be described as a free social order? The High Caste who comes forward to defend Caste System and its by-product Untouchability no doubt claims that it is. They, however, forget that there are differences between untouchability and slavery, which makes untouchability a worse type of an un-free social order. A slave was allowed to walk around the house, work in the kitchen, be a butler, look after the children as a baby

sitter etc., but on the other hand *Shudra* (untouchable) was liable to pollute; it is a matter of shame that in the twenty-first century i.e. still today, he pollutes any one he touches. There was a Hindu proverb, which said: 'The Untouchable is dead and the fear of pollution has vanished.' Once he is born an Untouchable, he is subject to all the disabilities of an Untouchable. The law of slavery permitted emancipation. Once a slave, always a slave was not the fate of the slave. To the *Shudra*, there is no escape, once a *Shudra* always a *Shudra*. This curse of Untouchability is

in the name of God, religion and in the name of 'ancestor's calling' as Gandhi maintained.

A *Shudra* Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., Bar-at-Law, D.Litt. LL.D. fought for 25 long years against Gandhi's theory of 'ancestor's calling' i.e. Caste System based on heredity, to emancipate his people from 5000 years of subjugation. It was a moral fight between Dr. Ambedkar, a 'political Scientist' and Gandhi, a lawyer, whose only qualifications in politics happened to be that an ignorant white South African train conductor kicked him out of the first class compartment. That kick at the right point in time made Gandhi a 'living martyr' and earned him the right to lead Indian National Congress dominated by High Caste rich with a following of illiterate and poor masses. India's literacy rate in those days was no more than 10% as compared to 65% by the end of 20th century. Those poor masses and the regions they belonged to are still poor but the leaders, High Caste as well as Gandhi's lackeys are, richer than ever before.

See Dr. Ambedkar's endeavour to free his people from 'abominable thralldom' and Gandhi's determination to keep *Shudras*, one-third of the population of India, as serfs for the High Castes in the name of Hindu religion, traditions, culture, customs and 'ancestral-calling'.

90. Sant Ram, being a born *Shudra*, appreciated Dr. Ambedkar's thesis. He rightly saw no difference in practice between caste system and *varnavyavastha*. Gandhi's statement, (in spite of the fact that Dr. Ambedkar had quoted chapter and verse from Hindu *Shastras* to show that they teach discriminatory caste system),

that "if the *Mandal* rejects the help of the *Shastras*, they do exactly what Dr. Ambedkar does i.e. cease to be Hindus" let the cat out of the bag - he believed in caste system.

91. Here, as Gandhi got cornered, he showed his true colours; came right in the open to support his belief in the continuation of Caste System. That is why he did not want to reform Hinduism, which the Punjabi Hindus tried to do by running a *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal*. To counteract that atmosphere of reformation of Hindu Society started by Dr. Ambedkar, Gandhi replaced *Shudras*'

5000-year-old rusty shackles with good-looking stainless steel ones by renaming them as '*Harijans*.' It was a brand new modern looking appellation to fool the *Shudras* and keep them down and under. It took 40 long years for Dr. Ambedkar to fight back and break the shackles of his people. Fanaticism of such self-righteous reformers as Gandhi who believed in Caste and *Varna* as words from God made India slave of Muslims and the British respectively for eight hundred years. No wonder, Muslims and Christians were so successful in converting Hindus to their respective religions. Hinduism could never become a missionary religion. In Canada a Hindu may allow his daughter to marry an illiterate white hippy, but it's big NO in case of a well-educated professional *Shudra* (*Dalit*) of same features and skin colour.

92. Intelligentsia of India including of course negligible number of Hindus (who practice inter-dining and intermarriages between them and the *Shudras* and do not believe in Caste System), are lucky and thankful to Dr. Ambedkar that he left behind his thesis on Caste and Caste System. We should also be thankful to the *Arya Samaji Mhashas* of the Punjab that they cancelled the conference because Dr. Ambedkar did not agree to delete 'that was his last speech as a Hindu'. Mr. Sant Ram of *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* said:

"The Doctor in the supplementary portion of his address insisted on saying that that was his last speech as a Hindu, which was irrelevant as well as pernicious to the interests of the conference."

Had the *Mhashas* let him speak, people would have heard it from one ear and discharged it from the other i.e. they would

have forgotten it in no time. Of the speech, Dr. D. Keer, a High Caste Hindu author in his 'Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission' says: *"The thesis is indeed the work of industrious reading, microscopic observation and a prognostication of what was revolving in its author's mind. It was logic on fire, pinching and pungent, piercing and fiery, provocative and explosive. It was to the minds of the Caste Hindu leaders what silver-nitrate is to gangrene."*

93. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) was the first Indian patriot to start a Sawaraj (Self-rule), boycott of British made goods and passive resistance, a movement that was later on copied by Gandhi.

Tilak a scholar, Mathematician, philosopher, and militant nationalist, laid the foundation for India's independence. In 1914, he founded (and served as its president) the Indian Home Rule League. Tilak's activities soon brought him into conflict with the British Raj, which prosecuted him for sedition and sent him to jail in 1897. The trial and sentence earned him the title Lokamanya, 'Beloved Leader of the People.' In April 1919, he played a leading role in Jallianwala episode, which resulted in condemnation of the British Empire on the world stage.

94. *Banias* of the Punjab used to be called 'loan sharks' and commission agents sitting pretty in the cities and everready to attack the farmer like a hawk. Since the *Banias* controlled wholesale and retail businesses of the Punjab, farmers were

under their heels to sell their products such as wheat and rice on exuberantly high commissions. The longer it took (and they did take long deliberately) for them to sell the product, the better it was for the *Bania* because if the farmer had to buy some commodity such as cloth or other household goods, they had to buy from their (*Bania's*) store on credit at ridiculously high interest; illiterate farmer had no choice but to succumb to the dirty designs of the *Banias*. Farmer could not borrow money from the bank because all the banks were owned and operated by

the *Banias* and/or *Khatris* who were just as ruthless in dealing with the farmers.

Before the independence of India 99.9% of the bank staff used to be Hindus i.e. *Banias* and/or *Khatris* who lent money only to the merchants who happened to be their own kith and kin. Come what may, farmers had no choice but to borrow from the Hindus at exuberant interest rate, resulting in a farmer making rounds, around a vicious cycle of poverty.

95. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) a Scottish historian and essayist,

authored many books, out of which the most famous was 'Past and Present' attacking England's social and political ills.

96. To clarify meaning of *Varna* from Canadian perspective, let us take the case of unskilled labourers immigrating into Canada and taking up jobs such as berry picking, dish-washing and janitorial work, which involves mopping of floors, dusting of furniture including emptying of cigarette ashtrays and cleaning of washrooms including of course, bathtubs, urinals and toilets. In India first two occupations are simply called menial jobs, but the one pertaining to janitorial work is specifically earmarked as a *Shudra's* occupation. Unlike hereditary nature of occupations in India, a low paid unskilled job based on division of labour is considered a steppingstone in Canada. Not that it can ever happen in Canada, let us suppose the vested interests of Canada become arrogant and dominant to an extent that they fabricate immoral laws to declare the above occupations as hereditary or as Gandhi called them as "ancestral callings", division of labour will unintentionally slip into gutters of dreaded Caste System. That is what the Brahmins did in ancient India, they created Castes and fabricated water tight compartments for *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishya*, *Shudras* etc. followed by thousands of sub-castes and threw the keys to that complex puzzle into the bottomless sea of Caste System. Since the ugly head of Caste System showed its devastating effects on the affected human beings and they started to retaliate, thousands of Avatars (reincarnations of Vishnu and other Gods and Goddesses), Seers, Sages, Swamis, Mahatmas and Gurus tried to find a solution to annihilate it but miserably failed. They failed because they tried

to repair the contaminated and 'beyond economical repair' building of Caste System with application of imaginary cleansers and cement i.e. theoretical hymns and sermons. None of them tried to demolish the old building and tried to build a new one i.e. they had no nerves to set practical examples of inter-dining and inter-marriages involving themselves and/or their own kith and kin. Fanatical approach to religion did not let Gandhi notice a see-through and very thin wall between *Varna* and Caste. Since 99% of Gandhi's followers were illiterate, he could hold beliefs

and views that are considered absurd in this time and age. Of the rest, .2% rich and leaders of the Indian National Congress paid homage to Gandhi in lieu of mesmerizing the poor in the name of religion, *Varna*, ancestral callings, traditions, cultures, customs and other gimmicks such as resorting to 'fast unto death' on trivial matters. They were only concerned about accumulating wealth while Gandhi kept the poor and the ignorant busy. He could not dare to stage a 'fast unto death' threat to goad the Hindus to treat *Shudras* as human beings; had he taken that route, they would have let him die rather than considering the *Shudras* their equals. Such queer circumstances gave Gandhi immunity from criticism. Mark Twain rightly observed, "Give a man reputation as an early riser and that man can sleep until noon." And that is what Gandhi thrived upon.

97. Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83), the founder of '*Arya Samaj*' was born at Tankara in Kathiawar, India. Dayanand took to social reforms, protested against the child marriages, pointed out the evils of the caste-system, worked for the emancipation of the *Shudras* and became an advocate of the women's rights.

Unfortunately, like any other reformers, Dayanand's mission also failed in annihilation of Caste, because neither himself in person nor his followers set up a practical example of inter-dining and inter-marriages with *Shudras*, the untouchables. Failure of *Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal* conference proved the fact that Hindus resisted reforms in any shape or form.

98. The Malaise of the Hindus goes deeper. It goes to the roots of their spiritual philosophy, viz. their belief in the theory of Karma and the theory of re-birth. According to these theories, a

person is born in a particular caste according to his/her Karma in the past life. It means that God has created Castes and graded inequality with differentiated sets of rights and duties in order to reward or punish the individual for his/her good or bad deeds in the past life. For Hindus, therefore, it is not a matter of pity that some people are deprived of all rights and good things of life and forced to live a life worse than that of an animal; it is all in the scheme of God. The pity is that even the *Shudras* who suffer under the Caste System believe in these theories because they

learn about Hinduism from their masters and the two theories are the main beliefs of Hinduism. Unless the *Shudras* refuse to believe in these theories i.e. in Hinduism, they will not have the mind to revolt against the iniquitous Caste System. That is why DR. Ambedkar gave up Hinduism and exhorted his followers to follow Buddhism.

Incidentally, these two theories also prompt the Caste Hindus to behave towards the *Shudras* the way they have been behaving for thousands of years. They think that to observe Caste System is their greatest dharma. Observing Caste, according to *Smritis*, means to differentiate between man and man, to give unequal share in the duties and rights and all the attendant iniquities mentioned in the *Smritis*.

99. Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930) attended Eton, Trinity and Cambridge colleges and from 1887 to 1891 served as chief secretary for Ireland under his uncle, Robert Cecil, the then prime minister. His philosophical, political, speaking talents and heritage gave Balfour the intellectual and political background for a 50-year career and power in the British Conservative party. He was British prime minister from 1902 to 1905 and foreign secretary from 1916 to 1919. In the later post he wrote the Balfour Declaration (1917) that expressed official British approval of Zionism and led indirectly to the establishment of Israel as an independent state in 1948. He also secured passage of the Irish Land Purchase Act that gave Irish tenant farmers the right to buy the land they worked.

100. Mathew Arnold (1822-88), the eldest son of Thomas Arnold, historian and great headmaster of Rugby, was a great

English poet, critic, and essayist. He was educated at Winchester, Rugby, where he won a prize for a poem on "Alaric at Rome"; and at Oxford, to which he went as a Scholar of Balliol College in 1841. He is most widely known for his classic study *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), a trenchant polemic against the materialism of Victorian society.

101. That did it, Gandhi asked for the battle and was granted. Gandhi, a self-righteous and third-rate politician, spoiled by illiterate 'yes men' of the Indian National Congress, lost the battle

to a political scientist for good. He could muster up nerves no more to reply to Dr. Ambedkar.

102. Modern buildings are furnished with one-way looking glass walled cubical offices for confidentiality purposes. One cannot look inside the office but the one inside can look outside. After 5000 years of open discrimination against the *Shudras* the modern crafty Hindus have devised ways and means of hiding inhuman treatment meted out to these millions by dishing out honorary positions as a 'show piece' in the world forum. First of all there are few and far between *Shudras* in high positions, secondly if there are one or two, their contact with foreign dignitaries is made impossible. This is how discrimination against *Shudras* is kept hidden from the world at large, particularly from America and Canada, the countries bent upon decimating 'descent-based and occupation-based discrimination' (please see Ann. V to this book showing how India succeeded in keeping the caste issue out of the World Conference against Racism).

103. Japan had already dropped few bombs on Bengal.

104. Erwin Johannes Eugen Rommel (1891-1944). When General Montgomery defeated Field Marshal Rommel at the battle of El Alamein in Egypt in October of 1942, Hitler ordered him back home in 1943. Soon Rommel became involved in a plot to oust Hitler from leadership. The plot fizzled out and Rommel was made to commit suicide on the 14th of October 1944.

105. Here what Ambedkar tried to explain to Gandhi was that his people were homeless, landless, were prevented from

attending schools, were denied entry to temples and were not allowed to use wells or pumps to draw drinking water. They were toiling in land-lords' farms as bonded labour, were sweeping the streets and cleaning Indian type toilets of human excrement by hand in lieu of crumbs and discarded clothes. Rather than listening to his plea Gandhi muddled up the talk with preconceived imaginary claim of being leader of Untouchables, 'beat around the bush' and side stepped the real issue.

106. 'Fast Unto Death' was Mr. Gandhi's greatest gimmick to

scare the *Raj*. On August 14, 1932, the British Prime Minister granted 'separate electorates' to the minorities and the Untouchables, turning mighty Hindus into a minority. It was same Mr. Gandhi who had said, "**I do not mind the Untouchables being converted to Islam or Christianity**" at the 2nd Round Table Conference. Now it was same Mr. Gandhi who went on 'Fast Unto Death' at Yeravda jail in Poona (now Pune) on September 19, 1932 to make Dr. Ambedkar to align with Hindus in politics to gain majority against the Muslims. Had he used the same trick and made it obligatory for the High Castes that in order to join Congress they had to make a pledge to inter-marry and inter-dine with *Shudras*, they would have told him to go ahead and die. He was well aware of the mentality of the High Castes Hindus; moreover, he himself believed in *varnashram* (Caste System) as a word from God.

GLOSSARY

Anaryas – They were other than Aryans, i.e. aboriginals and outcastes whom the Aryans hated.

Antyaja. - The last in the line i.e. Untouchables, outcastes for whom the Aryans had the least consideration.

Apsara - Dancer to please gods.

Arya Samaj - An association of the Aryans. It is an organization started by Swami Dayanand whose slogan was 'Back to the Vedas'.

Ashrama - It is a division of human life into four stages as per

Manusmriti viz. student, householder, retired life and recluse. It is not applicable to the *Shudras* and untouchables as life is one-continuous drudgery for them, with no education and no retirement.

Atishudra – The utmost *Shudra*, outcaste, untouchables.

Avarna – Non-caste people, the untouchables.

Avatar - Reincarnation, birth of God on earth in human form.

Bhudeva - Gods on earth, a title of the Brahmins.

Chamar - A worker on hides, leather and leather goods. He/she is an untouchable *Shudra* who also works as menial labourer.

Chandal – Wretched, wicked person, a name for the untouchables.

Chaturvarnya - Four-fold castes i.e. Brahmins, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishiyas* and *Shudras*. It is based on birth and not 'worth' of the individual.

Chuhra - An Untouchable caste of Punjab, usually scavenger.

Dalit - An appellation that the untouchables have given to themselves, literally 'down-trodden' (see Untouchables).

Das/Dasayus – Slave, a term for the untouchables.

Deendar/Dindar – An untouchable who embraced Islam.

Dharma - Sacred or secular duty, a proper course of conduct.

Dhoti - Loin Cloth wrapped around waist like a 'jumbo diaper'.

Dindar - A *Shudra* (untouchable) who embraced Islam.

Dvijās - Literally twice-born, the three High Castes i.e.

Brahmins, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*.

Fakir - A Muslim mendicant who lives on alms.

Gita/Geeta (Bhagwat Gita)- The most well known religious book of the Hindus. It also teaches caste system and supremacy of Brahmin. **Gotra** - Clan, lineage of an individual.

Guna Karma - Quality and deeds. Caste system as preached by *Arya Samaj* i.e. the theory that a person's caste should be determined on the basis of his/her personal qualities, works and character.

Guru - Spiritual teacher, a person well versed in scriptures.

Harijan - Mr. M. K. Gandhi gave this new appellation to the Untouchable. It was also the name of the periodical published

under close guidance of Mr. Gandhi. See footnote #1 to find origination of this scornful appellation.

Hindu Maha Sabha - A political organization of the Hindus.

Jat - A farming community named 'Jat'. A Sikh of that community is called 'Jat Sikh'. Traditionally they are *Vaishiyas*. They are exploiters of Untouchables in the villages.

Jat-Pat-Torak-Mandal - An association of Hindus dedicated to removing caste barriers, with Head Quarters at Lahore.

Jati Dharma - Caste duty as ordained by *Manusmriti*.

Kabir Panthi - They are follower of Saint Kabir, a sub-caste of the untouchables, mostly weavers.

Khalsa - A Sikh who wears unshorn hair, comb, steel bangle, typical underwear and sword, does not smoke.

Khatris - This is a Punjabi Hindu caste, *Vaishiya*, although they claim to be the descendents of *Kshatriyas*.

Kirtania - Those who sing in Hindu temples and Sikh *Gurdwaras*.

Kranti - The name of the periodical published by Mr. Sant Ram. Kranti means 'Revolution'.

Langar/Guru Ka Langar - Free kitchen, organized by Sikhs.

Lathis - Bamboo sticks.

Mahabharata - An Epic of the Hindus, concerned with the two ruling families, Pandwas and Kaurvas. Krishna plays a big role in the story. It also preaches caste system.

Mandal - Society.

Manusmriti - A book of Manu containing social, moral and political codes of the Hindus. In the past it served the same purpose as civil and criminal codes of India. Caste system is prescribed in that book.

Manuism/Manuwad - The philosophy of Manu particularly with reference to caste system.

Marathas - A land-based caste of Western India. The claim to be the descendants of *Kshatriyas*; exploiters of the Untouchables.

Mazhabi Sikhs - Sikh High Priests coined this new appellation

Mazhabi - As Mr. Gandhi renamed *Shudras* as *Harijans*;

Chuhras who embraced Sikhism were renamed as *Mazhabi* Sikhs.

Nai - Barber, a *Shudra* though touchable.

Namaskar - Hindu religious salutation.

Naxalite Movement - A violent revolutionary struggle started on sporadic basis by *Dalits* and aboriginals to get rid of rank exploitation. The government with a strong hand suppresses it. It derived its name from *Naxalbari*, a village in west Bengal from

where it started off.

Pandal - Meeting ground.

Panchamas – Of the fifth order, name for the outcastes, untouchables.

Patels - Land-based community in Western India; claim to be Rajputs and oppress the Untouchables.

Peshwas - Maratha Brahmin Prime Ministers and later independent Chieftains of Maratha community.

Pir - Muslim saint.

Prayaschitta - Repentance in a religious way.

Pugrees – Turbans.

Puranas - Ancient religious-cum history books written by Brahmins.

Raj - Rule, Government.

Rajputs - Literally sons of rulers. Descendents of *Kshatriyas*.

Ramayana - An Epic of the Hindus describing story of Rama and Sita. It also teaches caste system. Its version by Tulsi Das teaches caste system in much more vigorous way.

Ramdasia - Sikh High Priests renamed *Chamars* who embraced Sikhism as Ramdasis.

Ramgarhia Sikhs – He is a carpenter by trade, originally known as 'Tarkhan', was renamed by Sikh High Priests as 'Ramgarhia.'

Rig Veda - See *Vedas*.

Roda - A clean-shaven man; in this case it means a clean-shaven Sikh.

Sadachar - Good conduct as per tradition.

Sadhu - A Hindu or Sikh mendicant who lives on alms.

Sahyadrikhand - A Hindu scripture.

Sanatan – Eternal

Sanghatan - Hindu term for unity of all Hindus.

Sanskaras - Ritual, rite, sacrament, traits of previous birth, which become part of one's being as inheritance.

Sant - A saintly person amongst Hindus/Sikhs.

Sava Lakh - In this case 'Sava Lakh' is a hypothetical figure. A boasting figure of 125,000 means numerous.

Savarnas - They are High Caste Hindus.

Shastras - Hindu Scriptures.

Shudhi – Hindu term for conversion back to Hinduism.

Shishthas – Civilized behaviour.

Shudra - The lowest of the four-fold caste system of Hindus.

Sikh Prachar Conference - Sikh Missionary Conference.

Sultan - Muslim ruler.

Swami - A saintly person amongst the Hindus.

Swaraj - Self-rule.

Tarkhan - Carpenter.

Tryavarnikas - Three higher up castes i.e. *Brahmin*, *Kshtriya* and *Vaishya*.

Untouchables - Literally it means 'not worthy of being touched.'

Varna - Caste.

Varnavyavastha - Caste system.

Vedas - Hindu Scriptures of yore. There are four Vedas of which the most well known is the *Rigveda*. All of them teach caste system as godly creation.

Yadavas - An agriculture-based caste claiming to be descendents of Kshatriyas.

Yajna - A religious sacrificial rite of the Hindus at which Brahmins are fed, honoured and remunerated.

Yugas - Four time-periods into which the life of Universe is divided according to the Hindus.
